

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 197.

NEW YORK. OCTOBER 31, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE DUKE'S DIAMONDS; OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE YACHT.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



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The Bradys and the Duke's Diamonds

OR,

THE MYSTERY OF THE YACHT.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CALL FROM THE YACHT.

Old King Brady, the famous detective, wearing his well-known long-tailed blue coat, with brass buttons, and his big, white felt hat, entered his office on Park Row early one morning of a certain day in June.

It was decidedly warm and there was every evidence of a hot day.

The only person in the office was Young King Brady, the old detective's assistant and pupil.

Harry, as he was usually called by Old King Brady, seemed to be troubled about something.

"Mr. Brady, I am glad you have come!" he exclaimed. "Really, I was quite puzzled to know what to do."

"What's up?" demanded Old King Brady.

"A case over the telephone."

"What place?"

"No place."

"What do you mean? Speak out."

"It is from a yacht."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes, indeed."

"Whose yacht?"

"J. Q. Horton's."

"Biggest banker on Wall Street, or one of them."

"It's pretty near that."

"What does he want?"

"It's a diamond case, governor. I've got it down here on this paper as close as I could."

Young King Brady picked up the paper and read as follows:

"J. Q. Horton desires to see the Bradys on his yacht, the Pixie. Declined to state where yacht was lying, but it is within fifteen miles of New York. Desires to consult about stolen diamonds. Reason won't state where yacht is, fear that some one may hear, by crossed wire, and the papers may get on to the case. We are to go to office on Wall Street and will be then told how to reach the yacht. Wants us at once. Orders are to lay aside all other business and come, regardless of expense."

"Very good," said Old King Brady. "This promises to be a profitable case."

"You don't think there could be any trick about it, governor?"

"Surely not, or we should not be referred to the office."

"Probably we had better go there now."

"Right away. I will just look over the mail first."

"I have done that. There is nothing of any importance in the mail."

"Very well, then, we will go."

Ten minutes later the Bradys presented themselves at the great J. Q. Horton's office.

Here, as all the world knows, the clerks bear the reputation of being most insulting to the outside public.

There was no such nonsense in the case of the Bradys, however.

Old King Brady is, of course, as well known by sight on Wall Street as the statue of George Washington on the steps of the Treasury Building.

As soon as they entered, the Bradys were shown into the private office of the great financier.

Here they were received by Mr. Campbellton, his partner.

"I know your errand, gentlemen," he said. "Mr. Horton has communicated with me over the telephone."

"We were instructed to come here to find out how to get to the yacht *Pixie*," replied Old King Brady.

"Just so. The yacht lies off College Point. I have arranged for a steam launch from my own yacht to take you there at once."

"Very good, sir. And where do we get the launch?" Old King Brady answered.

"At the Battery stairs," said Mr. Campbellton. "I don't wish to hurry you, but I would suggest that you lose no time."

"We are ready. Have you anything to say about the case on which we have been called?"

"Nothing; for the excellent reason that I know nothing. Mr. Horton is a man of few words. He never tells his business. He merely called to the captain of a passing tug to telephone me that there was trouble on board and he wanted the Bradys, and I called you; that is all. But I mention to you, Mr. Brady, in strict confidence, that Mr. Horton is entertaining the Duke of Westmoreland on his yacht at the present time."

"Indeed! I was not aware that the Duke of Westmoreland was in America."

"It is not generally known, and Mr. Horton is particularly anxious that it shall not become known. His grace is traveling under the name of Mr. Underwood. You are aware, I presume, that he is one of the richest men in the world."

"I have heard so," replied Old King Brady. "These European big wigs seem to be all flocking to America about this time. But good-day, Mr. Campbellton; we will be off at once."

Mr. Campbellton gave the old detective a note to the engineer of the steam launch.

A little later the Bradys found themselves steaming up the East River, under a striped awning, in the daintiest little launch they had ever seen.

The engineer and one sailor were in charge of the launch.

Scarcely a word was spoken during the trip.

The yacht *Pixie* is too well known to need description. She is one of the finest crafts of her kind in America.

The Bradys found her lying at the entrance to the Sound, off College Point.

The engineer ran the launch up alongside and the Bradys were announced.

Word was at once returned for the detectives to come right aboard.

The sailormen on the yacht eyed them curiously as they came on deck.

Under a handsome awning sat an English-looking gentleman, with a bald head and mutton-chop whiskers, smoking a cigar.

With him was a young girl of considerable beauty, and a young man, also evidently English, dressed in a light, ill-fitting tweed suit, and a cork helmet hat.

Apparently he was paying a good deal of attention to the girl.

As the detectives approached he looked up and said, in an insolent tone:

"This deck is private. Nobody allowed here."

"We were told to come here, and here we propose to stay!" flashed Young King Brady.

He felt strongly like kicking the young snob, and we may mention in passing that Harry was quite able to do that very thing.

"Silence, Arthur!" spoke up the bald-headed man. "Probably these are the detectives."

"That is who we are, sir," replied Old King Brady. "Have I the honor of addressing the Duke of Westmoreland?"

"I am the duke, but I prefer to be addressed as Mr. Underwood," was the reply.

His grace looked somewhat annoyed.

Apparently he had intended to preserve his incognito with the Bradys.

If so, he would have had no chance even if Mr. Campbellton had not posted the old detective.

At this moment Mr. Horton came bustling up.

The great banker was a short, pudgy man of sixty, or thereabouts, very dictatorial and brusque in his manner to all, as is the present style with most great financiers.

"You are the Bradys, I presume?" he said, sharply. Old King Brady bowed.

"I am Mr. Horton. This gentleman is the Duke of Westmoreland. This young man is Mr. Arthur Banting, his traveling companion, and nephew-in-law."

Again Old King Brady bowed.

Mr. Horton did not introduce the girl, but the Bradys learned later that she was his own daughter.

Nor did he invite them to be seated, although he dropped into a steamer-chair himself.

This was a little too much for Young King Brady.

There was an air of insolent patronage in Mr. Horton's manner which Harry could not stand.

As it happened, there was but one other unoccupied chair on the deck, although the usual wooden seat ran around the inside of the rail.

The chair in question was being used by the Hon. Mr. Banting as a foot rest.

Young King Brady put his hand on the back, saying: "Is this seat engaged?"

Then without waiting for an answer he jerked it away and placed it for his great chief.

Mr. Banting glared, but said nothing.

Miss Horton tittered. Her father looked very much displeased.

"I will procure chairs," he said, rising.

"It is not necessary," said Old King Brady, paying no attention to the chair. "You telephoned for us, sir, and we came. What is it you want?"

"I want you to undertake a case for me, of course. What do you suppose I want?" snapped Mr. Horton.

Evidently the great financier considered the detectives dirt under his feet.

Still this was his manner of dealing with every one.

He was to receive a lesson on this occasion.

"My good man," said Old King Brady, "you need some one to teach you common civility. I have no use for your case. Do what you will with it. Come, Harry, we will go."

"Stop!" cried Mr. Horton, springing up. "There seems to be some misunderstanding here. I want the Bradys to handle this case. I don't want any one else."

"Even your millions can't buy my services unless I choose to give them," retorted Old King Brady. "I happen to be an American citizen and am accustomed to do as I please. Good-day, Mr. What's-your-name. There's nothing doing here."

Thus saying, Old King Brady, followed by Harry, walked to the steps at the foot of which the steam launch lay.

During all this the duke never spoke a word.

He now hastily arose, and, saying something to Mr. Horton, hurried on to the detectives.

"Mr. Brady," he said, "you are quite right; and we are all wrong. Pray reconsider your intention of leaving so hastily. I apologize for myself and friends."

"You owe me no apology, Mr. Underwood," replied Old King Brady. "As for your friends, let them speak for themselves. We are going on board the launch."

This, however, was easier said than done.

Probably Mr. Horton had given the engineer of the launch some signal, for he immediately cast off and shot away from the yacht.

Harry started to call him back, but Old King Brady promptly interfered.

"This is simply a high-handed outrage," he said, "and one which that man Horton shall be made to pay for. Kidnapping is rather a serious offence even in the case of as old a kid as I am."

Thus saying, Old King Brady sat down on the bench and lighted a cigar.

Harry joined him.

The sailormen stared as they moved about their work.

The duke stood uncertain what to do.

"Can't this thing be adjusted?" he asked at length.

"Most certainly not until that launch is recalled," replied Old King Brady. "I'm not fretting myself, but you can tell your friend Horton that he will find himself up against a whole lot of trouble before he gets through with me."

The duke hurried over to Mr. Horton.

A few words passed between them.

A bell rang.

A sailor hurried to the after-deck and back to the sailing-master of the yacht.

Then the whistle tooted three times.

The launch stopped.

Another toot.

The captain signalled for the launch to return, and it started back.

Meanwhile J. Q. Horton got up and slouched over to the detectives.

"I apologize," he said. "Is that enough?"

"No, it is not enough," replied Old King Brady.

"What more do you want?"

"To have you understand that you are no gentleman, Mr. Horton. There, my good sir, having expressed my opinion of you in plain terms, if you still desire our services and choose to pay my price, you can state your case."

Mr. Horton bit his lip.

Of course, he would have liked nothing better than to give orders to have both the Bradys thrown overboard.

The mighty autocrat had for once met a man who refused to fall down and worship him on account of his wealth.

"You appear to be a pretty plain-spoken man, Mr. Brady," he said, controlling his temper the best he could.

"That's what I am, sir."

"Well, then, I am another. I have need of your service."

"I know it."

"Nobody but the Bradys will suit me in this business. Pass over what has happened and there will be no more trouble. The launch will remain here until you decide whether to take up my case or not."

"And the price?" said Old King Brady, coldly.

"Name your own."

"My-retaining fee will be \$2,000 in advance," said the detective. "It will be returned if we decline the case; but it must be paid before I waste any further time."

"It shall be so. You will accept my check, I presume?"

Old King Brady bowed.

"Excuse me a moment. I will go to the cabin and draw up the check," said Mr. Horton, and he hurried away.

"Governor, you're great!" whispered Harry.

"I've read him a much-needed lesson," replied Old King Brady.

"And one that he won't forget in a hurry."

"Perhaps," said Old King Brady, shrugging his shoulders; "but here comes the duke to jolly us. We'll pass on this now. Consider the incident closed."

CHAPTER II.

WHO STOLE THESE DIAMONDS

The duke was by nature a much more affable person than Mr. Horton.

The latter could be genial enough when he had a point to gain, but he was naturally a hog.

"Come, come, gentlemen," said the duke, "let us begin

all over again. Mr. Brady, this is my business, after all. I can't believe you have any growl with me."

"I told you that before, Mr. Underwood," replied Old King Brady.

"So you did, so you did. Have a fresh cigar. You also, young man. Now come over under the awning and we will try to be sociable. Horton is hasty; as for Arthur Banting, I've given him a good lecture and sent him about his business. He needed it sadly. Between ourselves, Arthur, although a downright good fellow, is just a little too fresh, as you Americans put it. There, now, let us forget it all."

There was no resisting the hearty manner of the duke.

The Bradys went over under the awning.

The Hon. Arthur Banting and Miss Horton had departed.

In a minute Mr. Horton appeared with a \$2,000 check.

This he handed to Old King Brady, who put it in his pocket, and leaned back in his chair.

"Now for the case," he said. "What's wanted here?"

Now this sort of business, be it understood, was entirely contrary to the usual style of Old King Brady.

Many and many is the case which the kind-hearted old detective has undertaken and carried through to a successful finish, without a cent, for persons too poor to pay.

Mr. Horton now began his story, assuming a perfectly civil tone.

"Mr. Brady, my friend, Mr. Underwood, has met with a serious loss on board my yacht," he began. "In short, he has been robbed of a small wash-leather bag containing unset diamonds valued at over two hundred thousand dollars. What we want of you is to assist us in recovering them. As the robbery took place while Mr. Underwood was a guest on board my yacht, the whole of the expense and trouble in this disagreeable business falls on me."

Mr. Horton paused.

Had the whole case been stated?

Was it really possible that all this fuss and feathers had been made to state a case which could be told in these few brief words?

"Is that all?" asked Old King Brady.

"That is all," replied Mr. Horton.

"Except that you may count upon me for a reward of five hundred pounds in addition to what Mr. Horton gives you," said the duke.

"Indeed, your grace, I shall not permit it!" interposed Mr. Horton, hastily.

"And, indeed, you will not be consulted in the matter," replied the duke, in a commanding way.

Horton was silent.

"He is afraid of the duke," thought Old King Brady.

He said nothing aloud.

He wished to think before speaking, and so left the duke and the great financier to talk it out.

"I am not accustomed to be dictated to, Horton," continued the Duke. "The diamonds are mine, and if I choose to pay these detectives for recovering them, that

is my business. Another thing, it doesn't seem to me that you have stated the case fairly, by any means."

"Your grace!"

"Oh, you needn't put on any airs with me!" broke out the duke. "This is a very serious matter. It isn't so much the value of the diamonds, but they are old family heirlooms. I'll put the case right out in plain English, for that is my style. I tell you that I propose to change the settings of these stones for something more modern, and you tell me that if I will bring them over here you will introduce me to a party who can set diamonds nearer to up-to-date style than any one in the world. So what do I do but have the old settings pulled off so that I could hide the diamonds away from your infernal robbers in the custom house, and after escaping them, here they are lost on your yacht in a most mysterious way. I don't like this business at all, Horton. I tell you frankly, I don't like it at all."

Mr. Horton's little eyes gleamed angrily.

"Surely, your grace, you don't hold me responsible for the loss of your diamonds?"

"No, of course not. But when you send for the men who, by your own telling, are the best detectives in New York, if not all America, you first insult them, then try to drive them and then when you gain your point your infernal pride won't let you tell more than the barest outlines of the case, which gives them nothing to work on at all."

"Your grace is really very hard on me," said Mr. Horton, with a sort of protesting whine.

"I call a spade a spade, man. That's me. I speak right out. You are trying to use me for your own purposes and will probably succeed, but don't put me down as a fool."

It looked like a quarrel.

The Bradys lay back and took it all in.

It was a wily Wall Street man on one side, who dared not quarrel, and a blunt Englishman on the other, who did not care what he said, and who secretly regarded Mr. Horton as a mere tradesman and dirt beneath his feet.

Matters had gone as far as they could without an open rupture.

Mr. Horton saw this, and bowing silently, he arose and walked away.

"There goes as pig-headed a man as ever lived!" said the duke. "Now, then, Mr. Brady, I am disgusted with all this. Give back that fee in your pocket and do me the favor, sir, to take up the case for me."

"I'll do it, Mr. Underwood," replied Old King Brady.

"I'll write you a draft for the same amount Horton gave you."

"It is not necessary."

"But I prefer it."

"And I prefer not to take it."

"Very good; you shall have your own way. Now for the details of the case. You heard me state how I came to have these diamonds with me?"

"Yes."

"The thing happened just before midnight last even-

ing. We had been having a little game of baccarat in the cabin.

"I took out the bag of diamonds in order to get at some money which I had in the bag with the stones. I settled my loss at cards and the bag stood on the table. You'll remember how it blew last night. Well, sir, just as I closed the bag a terrible gust of wind struck us. It seemed as if the yacht was thrown on its beam ends. At all events, it threw us all out of our chairs on the floor. At the same instant the electric lights went out—some derangement of the battery. Horton was the first up, and he called for candles. By the time the servant brought them the lights were on again. The first thing I thought of was the bag of diamonds. It was missing when I came to look for it, and to shorten up the story it has been missing ever since. Those are the facts, gentlemen. Now question me as much as you will."

"Harry, have you made careful notes of all this?" asked Old King Brady.

"All here, governor," replied Young King Brady, holding up his pad.

"Do the same with Mr. Underwood's answers to my questions, please.

"Now, Mr. Underwood, who was present at this baccarat game?"

"Myself, Mr. Horton and Mr. Banting."

"No one else in the cabin at the time?"

"Yes; my valet, Alphonse Diderot, who was waiting upon us."

"No one else?"

"No one."

"The door was locked?"

"No."

"What length of time did the cabin remain in darkness?"

"Perhaps a matter of three or four minutes—five at the most."

"You were all thrown upon the floor, including the valet?"

"I can't say whether Alphonse went down or not. The rest of us did, and I presume he did, too."

"It was Alphonse who rang for the candles?"

"Yes."

"He did not leave the cabin?"

"No."

"Who brought the candles?"

"Horton's valet."

"His name?"

"Dick Ring."

"The loss of the diamonds was discovered before this man came in?"

"Just at the time the electric light was turned on I discovered that the bag was not on the table."

"Did Ring remain in the cabin?"

"No. He went right out."

"Was anything said about the loss of the diamonds before he went?"

"No. I was looking on the floor, but I did not say why till after he had gone."

"Your valet, is he thoroughly trustworthy?"

"Entirely so. He has lived in my household since he was a boy ten years old. His father was my valet for twenty years, and when he died I took the son."

"You do not suspect him?"

"I cannot, and yet he may be the thief."

"Is it generally known on board that the robbery has occurred?"

"They all know. Horton kicked up a great row over it, although I tried to stop him. He had the whole crew stood up in line while the captain searched them. I insisted that Alphonse should be searched with the rest, although I assured the boy of my perfect faith in his innocence."

"And nothing came of the search?"

"Nothing at all."

"The cabin was searched, of course?"

"Oh, yes; thoroughly."

"Who by?"

"Horton and myself. Banting assisted."

"Who is this Mr. Banting?"

"My wife's nephew."

"Just so. Has any one left the yacht since the robbery?"

"Now that's the only sensible thing Horton did. He gave positive orders that no one should leave the yacht until the Brady detectives came aboard and made a thorough search."

"I see. Then the diamonds, unless they have gone overboard, should be on the yacht now."

"That's what I believe."

"Very well, Mr. Underwood, that is all I wish to know."

"You will take the case?"

"Yes. Now I want your help in this."

"You shall have it."

"We will now retire. Let the yacht remain where it is. Let no one go ashore."

"Right!"

"Inside of two or three hours a small boat will pull up alongside here with two men, an old man and a younger one. They will ask for employment on board the Pixie, and must be at once engaged. Can that be arranged?"

"I think it can."

"You must be certain."

"Of course, these men will be yourselves?"

"Certainly."

"I will see that it is done; or if Horton refuses he will hear from me in a way he won't like."

"Very well. Upon this the case will turn. Of course we can do no business unless we come secretly aboard the yacht, and the best way will be to come in disguise."

"Exactly so."

"Another thing. You must give it out that the diamonds have been found."

The duke drew himself up proudly.

"I am not accustomed to lying, Mr. Brady. I am——"

"Pardon a moment. If you say that, it will be no lie."

"What can you mean?"

"Precisely what I say."

"But the diamonds?"

"What are these, Mr. Underwood?"

Old King Brady had been sitting with his left hand tightly closed.

Now he suddenly opened it and thrust it toward the duke.

"Merciful heavens! Two of the best diamonds in the collection!" cried the duke. "I positively identify those as having been in the bag!"

CHAPTER III.

THE BRADYS GET DOWN TO WORK.

The surprise of the duke was not a bit greater than that of Young King Brady.

Harry could not possibly imagine how the old detective had come by the precious stones.

"You are making no mistake, Mr. Underwood," said Old King Brady; "you actually know these stones?"

"I do. Where on earth did you get them?"

"That I must decline to answer."

"But, my dear sir——"

"Mr. Underwood, I never talk about my cases until they are completed. I will, however, break my rule so far as to state that these two diamonds were not found on board this yacht, but in the city of New York."

"Amazing! Can you not tell me more?"

"No more now; but I want proof that these diamonds belong to you."

"And you shall have it, sir. Are you a judge of diamonds?"

"Somewhat so."

"Examine that larger stone and you will find an infinitesimal flaw on the left side of the facet nearest to the top."

Old King Brady took out a glass and carefully studied the diamond.

"It is there," he said. "And the other."

"The other you will hold up to the light and look through it and you will find that it has a faint violet tinge."

"Exactly so. The diamonds are yours, beyond a doubt."

"This is amazing, Mr. Brady."

"It is a most fortunate occurrence, sir. How much do you value these diamonds at?"

"The pair I should hold at least a thousand pounds."

"They are worth more money. Now, Mr. Underwood, with your permission I shall keep these two diamonds for a few days to use as a bait to draw in the other stones."

"You are welcome to do so. May I ask one question?"

"Certainly."

"Does the finding of these diamonds give you any clue to the whereabouts of the rest?"

"None at all, unfortunately. It merely proves one thing."

"And that is?"

"I cannot state."

"And am I to tell it out that you have the diamonds?"

"Not by any means. Let it pass as a fiction invented at my request as far as Mr. Horton and Mr. Banting are concerned. Let the captain and crew believe that it is true."

"Very well. As long as I don't have to lie, I consent to that."

"We shall now leave the yacht. May I see Mr. Horton so as to return him the check?"

The duke touched an electric bell attached to one of the awning posts.

A trim young Frenchman appeared.

"Alphonse, say to Mr. Horton that I desire to see him," said the duke.

Alphonse bowed and retired.

"Well," said the duke, "what do you think of the boy?"

"Probably innocent."

"I stake my life that he is. Ah! here comes Horton now."

Mr. Horton had entirely changed his manner.

"Well, have you gentlemen come to an understanding?" he asked.

"Entirely so," replied the duke. "The Bradys are to take up the case for me."

"Here is your check, sir," said Old King Brady. "We are working for Mr. Underwood now."

"As you will," replied Horton, shrugging his shoulders. "So long as Mr. Underwood is satisfied, I am. Any instructions for me?"

"Mr. Underwood will give them. Good-day, gentlemen!"

The Bradys bowed and withdrew.

Mr. Campbellton's launch was all ready for them.

As they boarded it Old King Brady ordered the engineer to take them to Flushing, which was not more than three miles away.

"Not a word until we are free," he whispered to Harry.

Then turning to the engineer he said:

"Why did you go off a while ago?"

"Mr. Horton waved his hand to me to go, sir," was the reply.

"You are sure he meant that?"

"I am."

"You often carry Mr. Horton?"

"Very often."

"Consequently you understand his signals?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did you carry him last?"

"About a week ago, sir."

"Who did you take ashore from the yacht last night?"

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you!"

"Why, nobody, sir. I'm Mr. Campbellton's man, sir. I was out with his yacht last night."

"Where?"

"Really, sir, I'm under orders not to talk about the boss' business to strangers. I don't know you. I can't answer any more questions, sir."

"Right," said Old King Brady. "You are a good fellow and know your own business, which is more than most people do."

Nothing more was said until they reached Flushing.

The engineer ran the launch in by the bridge and the Bradys went ashore.

Old King Brady hurriedly led the way to the railroad station, where they went in and sat down.

"At last!" exclaimed Young King Brady. "Governor, where did you get those diamonds?"

"Why, Harry," replied the old detective, "I found them in my shoe!"

"In your shoe! What on earth——"

"Wait. I have given you a whole lot of lessons about observing; now let us see how well you have profited by them. Did you observe anything about me when I first took my seat in Mr. Campbellton's launch?"

"You said, 'Jerusalem!' and jumped up again."

"Exactly! And then?"

"Then you brushed something off the seat and then, yes, by Jove! you stooped down and picked something out of one of those ridiculously loose low shoes which you will always persist in wearing. I supposed it was some bit of gravel which you had managed to get into your shoe."

"Harry, it was those diamonds!"

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, that is what it was. When I sat down on the seat I sat on something mighty hard. Impatiently I brushed off the obstruction which consisted, as I supposed, then, of two bits of paper rolled up into two tight balls, both of which went into my shoe. I picked them out and as I did so the bit of gray tissue paper, wrapped around one of these diamonds, came off in my hand. I caught the glitter of a diamond. Naturally both stones went into my pocket. Later I had a chance of finding out what sort of a find I had made, when nobody was looking. That's the whole story of this very important clew."

"Important clew! I should say it was! Why, it is the most remarkable thing I ever heard of."

"Not quite that, Harry. Still it is certainly remarkable."

"But how on earth do you suppose the diamonds came to be in Mr. Campbellton's launch?"

"I suppose that the thief may have gone ashore last night in that launch."

"But the engineer declared he was with Mr. Campbellton's yacht all night."

"The engineer probably lied. At some time last night he or somebody else went to the Pixie."

"All this must be looked into."

"Instantly."

"I almost wonder that you let the man go."

"The man can be picked up again at any time we want him. It is better that it should be so."

"Of course he knew who we are."

"Undoubtedly, if he is anything of a crook."

"Who is to do the job?"

"I shall undertake that."

"But you told the duke——"

"That we would come aboard the Pixie in disguise. You will go. I will take the next train for the city. Meanwhile you are to engage a rowboat and disguise yourself as a sailor. As soon as possible Russell will join you. He must go in my place."

Russell was an old Secret Service detective, who, in a general way, resembled Old King Brady.

The Bradys had often found occasion to use him for similar business before.

It was arranged to do so now.

Old King Brady took the train for Hunter's Point, where he crossed the Thirty-fourth Street Ferry to New York.

Harry remained behind to look up the boat, arrange his disguise and wait for Russell.

The disguise part was easily arranged. After the boat was engaged.

Young King Brady went to a cheap hotel and engaged a room.

Next he visited a small clothing store and had soon purchased all he wanted in the way of clothes.

These articles he tied up in a tight bundle and smuggled them into the hotel without attracting any attention.

Soon afterward he smuggled them out again and went down to the wharf where the boat lay.

Now, as is well known, the Bradys, when working up a case, never stand on the question of expense.

Harry did not hire the boat, he bought it outright.

At the same time he told the man who sold it that a young sailor would call and take it away.

Harry had so cleverly disguised himself that the boatman never suspected that he was the same person.

Young King Brady got into the boat and pulled off to a place down near the bridge.

Here he hung around for over an hour.

A train went by, coming from New York.

Soon afterward Harry, sitting in the boat, was hailed by a tall old man, roughly dressed.

"Hello, Young Brady!" the man called down from the bridge.

"Hello, Russell!" replied Harry. "Come right aboard."

The man climbed down a rough, standing ladder and entered the boat.

"Gimme them oars, Brady," he said, "I'll pull."

Harry was only too glad to get rid of the rowing.

"Which way?" asked Russell, after Harry had cast off the line.

"Off College Point."

"O. K. Here we go! The boss said you would tell me all about the case."

Harry did so.

The only thing he omitted was to mention the finding of the two diamonds, for Old King Brady had particularly charged him to keep silent on that point.

"Queer kind of case," said Russell. "Still there hain't nothing complicated about it. Of course, one of them valet men is the thief."

"Probably," said Harry. "What we have to do is to study into the habits of all on board the yacht and wait until we hear from Old King Brady before we act."

"Of course, if we should happen to find the diamonds we are going to freeze onto them—at least that would be my idea."

"Oh, certainly!"

"Strange, but money don't keep a man from trouble. These big bugs have theirs just as well as we common folks."

"Of course they do," replied Harry; and then the conversation dropped.

Russell was an ignorant man as far as looks went, but a remarkably keen observer and as true as steel.

Harry felt much pleased to have him with him in the business, seeing that he could not have Old King Brady.

Strange as it may seem, Harry did not feel altogether safe in cooping himself up on the yacht of the arbitrary banker.

The Bradys had been through not a few strange experiences with multi-millionaires.

Young King Brady had seen enough of Mr. Horton to feel sure that he was a man who would stick at nothing to gain his ends.

The boat was pulled up alongside the Pixie and made fast.

"Well, what's wanted?" called the sailing-master, gruffly.

"I thought mebbe you were short-handed," answered Russell. "Me and my son is looking for a job."

"Well, I have just had notice to take on two more men. Where do you belong?"

"Flushing."

"What name?"

"Mine's Jack Mott. His'n is Jack, Junior."

"Been working on a yacht before?"

"Never on a yacht. We have both been sailormen all our lives."

"You'll do."

"How about the pay?"

"It's fifteen a month if you suit."

"That suits us, all right."

"When can you come?"

"We kin stop right now."

"But your boat?"

"Can't it be hitched on astern of the launch? 'Most likely there'll be a chance to send it ashore. Anyhow, tain't good for nothing. If it's lost I shan't care."

"Make fast and come aboard!" was the reply.

Mr. Horton, the duke, the Hon. Mr. Banting and Miss Hattie Horton were all under the awning when Russell and Young King Brady went aboard.

Of course, the sailing-master knew that they were detectives.

But the crew never dreamed of such a thing.

They were supplied with yachting suits from the "shop chest," as the sailing-master put it.

Later the duke passed them.

Harry watched him narrowly.

There was nothing about the duke's face to indicate that he suspected that Russell was not Old King Brady.

Late in the afternoon Mr. Horton went to Flushing in the launch.

It was given out among the crew that he was to take the train for New York.

He merely glanced at the detectives as he passed them.

When the launch pulled away Harry saw that his boat was in tow.

He had told the sailing-master that it was to be delivered at a certain place in Flushing, if the chance came to send it there, but he had not expected to see it go off with the banker.

"We are stuck here for fair now, Jack," remarked Russell, polishing away at the brass railing on which he was working.

"That's what we are; and I'm glad of it," replied Harry, in a voice scarcely audible. "Whoever the diamond thief may be it is certain that he is on this yacht, and for my part I don't care to leave it until the mystery is solved."

CHAPTER IV.

OLD KING BRADY GOES ON A TEAR.

"Look out for that man! Look out, there! He'll be drowned just as sure as fate!"

It was a little before sundown, and the scare was at the Battery stairs between the fireboat house and Pier A, where the Dock Commissioners hold forth.

An elderly man, with a white beard and very handsomely dressed, came reeling down the stone steps at the foot of which lay a natty little steam launch, evidently belonging to some gentleman's yacht.

The man in the launch sprang up, warned by the cries of the bystanders above.

He was too well accustomed to dealing with rich men not to recognize the value of the clothes and jewelry the old man wore.

"Drunk as a fiddler!" he muttered. "I must go slow, though. He may be one of the boss' friends."

"This is a private launch, sir. Be careful or you'll fall into the water!" he called out.

"That's all right," replied the old gentleman, thickly. "I know what I'm about. I know how to take care of myself. I want to go off to my yacht."

"This is Mr. Campbellton's launch, sir. Haven't you made a mistake?"

"No mistake at all," replied the man, swaying from side

to side. "My name's Mullholland. I want to go off to my yacht."

Of course, this finely jagged old gentleman was no one but Old King Brady, in disguise.

In giving the name of Mullholland he had given that of one of the wealthiest of the old-time politicians in New York, whose name was known far and wide, but who, on account of his age, was now seldom seen.

The engineer never dreamed that this was the tall man with the white hat whom he had taken out to the Pixie in the morning.

"What is the name of your yacht?" he asked.

"It's the—the—say, I forget the name. You're my man, aren't you?"

"No; I'm Mr. Campbellton's man," replied the engineer.

"That's all right. I'm going off to my yacht."

Before the engineer knew what he was going to do, the detective stepped aboard the launch, pitched headlong and fell face downward, nearly upsetting the launch and tumbling the engineer into the water.

The people upon the pier laughed and jeered.

"This is a pretty piece of business!" muttered the engineer. "Suppose the boss comes now?"

But the engineer did not really expect Mr. Campbellton.

Word had come to him that in case Mr. J. Q. Horton's partner was not on hand by five o'clock, he was not to wait, and the yacht was to lie off the Statue of Liberty all night.

It was now ten minutes to five, consequently the engineer had not much fear.

He helped the old gentleman to a sitting position.

"That's all right! That's all right!" Mr. Mullholland kept saying. "Now we are all right. Take me off to my yacht."

And the wily detective said something else without opening his lips.

He opened his pocketbook instead and gave the engineer a twenty dollar bill.

Of course, the engineer never took tips—oh, no!

This one got lost in the shuffle, however.

There were more twenty dollar bills in old man Mullholland's wallet, and the engineer saw them.

"He'll give me another in a minute if I jolly him," he thought.

"Can't you remember the name of your yacht, Mr. Mullholland?" he asked. "My boss hain't coming. I could take you off to it just as well as not."

"No, I can't," replied Old King Brady, with solemn gravity. "No, I can't remember. I don't know why I can't remember, but I just can't."

"Try," said the engineer.

"No use. Sometimes I forget my own name. My man usually goes around with me, but he got drunk to-day and so I'm lost. Bad business. No use for a man who can't take a drink without getting full."

"That's right," said the engineer. "I wish you could remember the name of your yacht, though."

"Can't be done," said the detective, owlily. "I say, it's a great problem—a very great problem. Don't tell me it ain't a great problem, you man!"

"Of course it is."

"Of course it is. Just as you say, of course it is. I'll tell you how to solve it, though."

"How?"

"Let's go across the street and take a drink. If I can only get a drink, it will make my head clear and then I can remember the name of my yacht."

The engineer's eyes glittered.

Old King Brady knew that he was dealing with an unprincipled scoundrel, who only wanted the opportunity to make a first-class thief.

"I've got him," he thought. "I've surely got him if Mr. Campbellton don't change his mind and come."

Now, Mr. Campbellton was proposing to go out of town that night, and had so informed Old King Brady over the 'phone.

"I'll tell you what," said the engineer, "if the boss don't come in five minutes, I'll go and take a drink with you."

"He'll propose a private room," thought Old King Brady, "and he'll go through me if he gets a chance."

"All right," he said, aloud. "I'll wait five minutes, and then we'll go and have a drink."

In less than two minutes Old King Brady, to all appearance, was sound asleep, with his head hanging down over his breast.

Meanwhile the people on the pier who had been watching all this, and finding that there was nothing doing, had gone away.

The newcomers who drifted into their places supposed, naturally, that the sleepy old gentleman was the owner of the launch.

"Wake up, boss! Wake up! Change cars!"

Some one was shaking Old King Brady.

Some one helped him tenderly up the steps and led him across Battery Place to a noted corner cafe.

Of course, that some one was the engineer, and his picking out this place instead of one of the dens further down the street, showed Old King Brady that he was working alone.

What he most feared was that the engineer had some acquaintance on the Battery and that he had given him the tip to follow them.

With two against him it would be hard to say what the consequences might be.

But it was only the engineer.

"This is my boss; he's a little off. Can't we have a private room?" he whispered to the cashier.

A waiter showed them into one at once.

Here Old King Brady ordered champagne.

The old detective knew his business.

Personally he had not tasted a drop of anything intoxicating.

He felt that a few glasses of champagne would not hurt him.

He felt also that there was nothing so likely to make the engineer "talky" as champagne.

It did the business.

The engineer was soon very sociable.

"What's your name?" asked Old King Brady, when at last the right time to begin his questioning came.

Now, the engineer had intended to give a false name, but instead of that he gave his true name, "McRonald."

"I like you, Mac," said Old King Brady. "Say, you're a blame good feller. What's your boss pay you?"

"Sixty dollars a month," said Mac.

"Sixty dollars a month for a man of your ability! Why, that's sweating—rank sweating. How would you like to come and work for me? I'll give you a hundred dollars a month. Now, how's that?"

"I should like that, first rate," replied the engineer.

"Well, then, here's my card. Say, I can't find my card, but I'll write you my address before I go. Say, there's only one thing. Can you keep dark?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know. Have another glass of champagne then you'll know, Mac."

Mac indulged.

Old King Brady managed to spill his on the floor.

"Course I can keep dark," said Mac. "I keep gentlemen's secrets always. Never know me to give nothing away. If the boss comes aboard a little loaded I don't never say nothing about it. I am not that kind of a man. Then when there's ladies into it, I'm a perfect bute for keeping a secret. Why, I brought a lady and a gent off the yacht of one of the richest men in New York, last night; brought them down to the city and carried 'em back again and nobody never one bit the wiser—no!"

It was coming at last.

Old King Brady had been working nearly an hour over it; now he felt that the information he sought had come.

"Who were they?" he asked.

Mac shook his head, sagely.

"Oh, I'm not telling. I'm not telling," he replied.

"Bet you a bottle of wine I could name the owner of the yacht," said Old King Brady, throwing more than usual thickness into his speech.

"Bet you!" replied Mac.

"Morgan, the banker?"

"You've lost. You're not so far off, though. It was a banker's yacht, but not Morgan's. Oh, no!"

"Horton's then?"

"Well, yes."

"Caught on the bounce!" chuckled Old King Brady. "That puts the wine on me."

He rang the bell and ordered another bottle.

"Where did you land them?" he asked, carelessly, at the same time giving the engineer a fresh cigar.

"Well, it was by the Thirty-fourth Street Ferry, and I picked them up at the same place. It was done slick, I tell yer; getting 'em off the yacht and on again with no one seeing."

"Of course the watch saw you."

"I didn't see the watch. I suppose Mr. Banting fixed that part all right."

He had let the name slip and never knew it. Old King Brady was making fine headway.

The wine came, and, having been opened, the engineer got away with another glass.

"Where did they go, do you suppose?" asked Old King Brady.

"How should I know? That hain't none of my business."

They talked further on different subjects.

After a little Old King Brady made an excuse to slip out into the cafe.

The place was all doors, so to speak.

One door led to the main corridor of one of the largest office buildings downtown.

In an instant Old King Brady had passed into it.

Two minutes later the old detective was seen walking up Broadway.

He had made one of his lightning changes in a convenient corner.

"Twenty dollars will pay that fellow for the slight inconvenience I have caused him," he said to himself. "Let him get out of it the best he can."

It was now about six o'clock.

Feeling that he was liable to have to put in several more hours' work, Old King Brady gave himself half an hour for supper.

Then he went uptown on the Second Avenue railroad.

His destination was the ferry at the foot of East Thirty-fourth Street.

Here he knew that he would have a comparatively easy task, for his object was to pump a policeman, and said policeman owed his appointment on the force to Old King Brady himself.

"Hasn't Reilly come on the beat yet?" asked the detective, approaching the officer at the ferry gate.

"Not yet, Mr. Brady," replied the policeman, with great respect.

"When is his time?"

"He is my relief. He is on night's now. He's due here in ten minutes just."

"I understood he was on nights," said Old King Brady. "Officer, can you give me ten minutes with Reilly? I won't keep you longer."

"Sure!" replied the policeman, pocketing the two-dollar note the detective slipped into his hand.

Reilly came and the detective got him into the back room of the corner saloon at First Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street.

"What's up, Mr. Brady?" asked the policeman. "If there is anything in the world I can do for you, give it a name."

"It is a very important matter, Reilly. Last night, somewhere about one or two o'clock a young man and a girl landed at the pier alongside the ferry, where the steam launches of the rich yacht owners tie up. I want to know

where they went after their landing, and what time they came back again."

"Well, then, you have come to the right man for part of the information, Mr. Brady."

"I thought as much."

"I saw them when they came up off the pier. It was a little feller dressed like an Englishman."

"Right."

"The lady wore a heavy veil."

"Very likely. Were you speaking to them, Reilly?"

"Sure I was. They came right up to me."

"Can you tell me where I'll find a cab?" says the feller.

"I can," says I, and I called Barney Flynn, who is running a night-hawk now."

"What time was this?"

"Half-past one in the morning."

"Where did Barney drive them, do you know?"

"Sure, I never asked him. I'll call him, though. He'll tell you, all right, Mr. Brady."

"Do so, please."

Reilly went for the cabman.

Old King Brady set up the drinks when he came.

"It's about my fare last night, is it?" asked Flynn.

"That's what!" said Old King Brady.

"Well, sir, it was an elopement, I guess."

"Ah, ha! I suspected as much. Tell me all about it and you shall earn your fare over again, Flynn."

"Well, it was this way," said the cabman: "I was sitting in me cab when Reilly come to me and says——"

"Just a moment, Mr. Flynn. The officer at the ferry is holding over to accommodate me. Tell me where you drove them, first; that will answer every purpose so far as I'm concerned."

"It was to Goldstein, the pawnbroker, on First Avenue."

"Yes, yes!"

The trail was getting hot, it seemed to Old King Brady. That this was but a blind lead he was soon to know.

"Yes," said Reilly, "he asked me did I know a pawnbroker who would not object to being called up in the middle of the night to make a good deal."

"I says, 'There's Goldstein. If he seen ten cents what some feller had dropped on top of his grave it's my opinion he'd come out of the grave to get it.' Them's my very words, Mr. Brady, as true as we are standing here."

"Go on," said Old King Brady, restraining his impatience the best he could.

"He's my man, then, for I have a good bargain to offer him," says the English feller. "Drive there and get him up an' I'll give you ten dollars," he says."

"And did you?"

"Sure, I did."

"What came of it?"

"Nothing at all. I got Goldstein out of bed, by lots of bell ringing, and at last he came down and let the feller into the store. It wasn't but a few minutes before he came flying out again."

"The man's a rogue and a swindler!" he says. "I can never sell the diamonds to him."

"Diamonds! Did he say diamonds?"

"That's what he did."

"What happened then?"

"Then he told me to drive to a house in East Twenty-eighth Street. I forget the number, but I'd know the house. It's just off Madison Avenue, and the Reverend Mr. Lansing is the man what lives into it. He's the preacher in St. Michael's Church."

"Yes, yes, I know. Did they both go in there?"

"They did. The feller rang the bell three times; the parlor was lit up and they were let in. About ten minutes afterward they came out again."

"Married?" asked Old King Brady.

"That's what I think."

"And then?"

"Then, boss, I drove 'em back to the pier again and they got on their launch and steamed away."

"Good!" cried Old King Brady. "Now, then, Flynn, drive me to that parson's house and leave me there, and here's five dollars for the job."

A little later Old King Brady pulled the Reverend Lansing's bell.

The clergyman was a stiff, uncomfortable sort of man. He received Old King Brady coldly and at first refused to talk.

"My business with that gentleman was private, sir!" he said. "Merely because you show me a detective's shield I don't recognize your right to question me."

"It is not a matter of right, perhaps, Mr. Lansing," replied Old King Brady, "but it may become so. Your business with the gentleman was to marry him to the lady. A robbery of diamonds has been committed. This young man is suspected. In the interest of justice and honesty I ask you to tell what you know. Refuse, and I go straight to police headquarters and in less than an hour you will have a swarm of detectives at your door with a glowing account of your midnight marrying in the yellow journals to-morrow."

The clergyman flushed angrily.

"So you threaten, do you?" he demanded. "Very well. I——"

"Oh, no! No threats," broke in Old King Brady. "I merely state facts. It is up to you to choose."

The clergyman paced the floor for a few minutes, in silence.

"If I tell what I know will that end it so far as I am concerned?" he asked.

"Unless the matter comes to trial. Yet I don't think it ever will."

"So be it. I did marry them."

"Yes?"

"Do you know who they were?"

"I do. Do you?"

"The Hon. Arthur Banting, nephew of the Duke of Westmoreland, and Harriet Horton, daughter of the Wall Street banker."

"Exactly so. They had an appointment with you?"

"Yes."

"How about it?"

"Oh, they became engaged when the lady was in England. The duke opposed the marriage, having other plans for young Banting. Whether Horton favored it or not I am not at liberty to state——"

"Which means that he did and you have fully consulted him in the matter," said Old King Brady, quietly.

The Reverend Lansing glared at the detective as though he would have liked to annihilate him.

"I'm telling all!" he growled. "I suppose I might as well tell it to you as tell it to others and I suppose that is what it is coming to. I might have known."

"Go on," said Old King Brady. "We are wasting time."

"There was an understanding. Horton is a member of my church. He told me there would probably be an elopement, and that I was to marry the girl. Last week Miss Horton called on me and made the appointment, and early this morning the couple pulled my bell. The young man, I regret to say, was somewhat intoxicated. Moreover, he claimed to have no money for my fee. He offered me instead a valuable diamond or what seemed to be such, and asked me to loan him a hundred dollars, saying that he would redeem the diamond and pay me two hundred dollars by the end of the week."

"Indeed! And your answer?"

"I told him I was no pawnbroker. I waived the fee. Of course, Mr. Horton will make it good. Besides, how did I know what the stone was worth, or whether it was a diamond at all?"

"Was it like these diamonds?" demanded Old King Brady, suddenly producing the two gems. "Be careful, Mr. Lansing. Let me tell you that diamonds to the value of something like two hundred thousand dollars have been stolen from the duke, on board Mr. Horton's yacht!"

CHAPTER V.

YOUNG KING BRADY TRIES A BOLD GAME.

Mr. Horton left the yacht in his private steam launch soon after Young King Brady and Detective Russell came aboard.

The duke retired early to his stateroom, and it was given out that he was feeling ill.

This left the deck to Mr. Banting and Miss Horton, after dinner.

Of course, the eyes of all the sailors were upon them.

It was evident that they were very much in love.

As soon as Mr. Horton was fairly out of sight the sailing-master had one of the lifeboats manned and pulled off for Flushing.

Discipline was broken at once.

The sailors now talked freely among themselves.

Young King Brady left them to Russell.

He had already determined that he had no use for any-

thing they might be able to tell, beyond what Russell could easily pump out of them.

Harry felt that his own work lay in a different direction.

Near where young Banting and Miss Horton sat, one of the lifeboats hung to the davits.

Harry slouched along to the boat and pretended to be working over it.

Then while Banting was calling Miss Horton's attention to one of the Sound steamers which happened to be passing, Young King Brady crawled into the boat and lay down.

"Where is that fellow?" he heard Banting ask, in a low voice, a minute later.

"I don't know. I think he went away," the girl replied.

"I daresay now, dearest, what is to be done. If I had not lost the diamonds everything would have been all right."

"That's just it, Arthur; but you did lose them, and it is so provoking to think that here we are married, I, the daughter of one of the richest men in America, and you the nephew of one of the richest in England, and between us we have not money enough to go on our wedding trip."

"I know it. Outrageous!" groaned Banting. "I feel like a fool."

"It is no use to ask your uncle for money."

"Not a bit. He swears he won't give me a penny until I give up you."

"You can't do that now, Arthur, dear."

A little love-making followed.

Their backs were turned to the lifeboat.

Young King Brady ventured to raise his head and take it all in.

"Heavens! They have been secretly married!" he muttered. "Wheels within wheels! What a fine pair of spoons they are. There's lots of fun in this case."

Then the talk turned on diamonds.

"Oh, Arthur! This horrid robbery has upset me so!" said Hattie. "Tell me, dearest, say it again, those—those diamonds you lost last night. They did not belong to your uncle?"

"Do you think I am a thief?" replied Banting, angrily. "Do you want me to keep saying it over and over again. The diamonds I had the great misfortune to lose out of that hole in my pocket were my own private property. I doubt if my uncle ever laid eyes on them. Now there!"

"Oh, it is such a relief to hear you say so, dear. All this has worried me so."

"You mustn't worry."

"Yes," pouted Miss Hattie, "that's all very well for you to say, but when a girl agrees to elope and—and——"

"And the groom has to bring her home again because he can't raise the price to take her away, it's beastly tough," broke in Banting. "Of course, my love, if you will persist in going over that disagreeable subject again and again, I can't stop you; but allow me to say I don't see the use."

"Well, I wanted to go to Montreal and Quebec and you promised to take me there," persisted Hattie.

"I know it. I can't help it, either. If you will only wait till your father gets the duke to sign those papers which will enable him to combine the two railroads, all can be arranged."

"But I don't want to wait. I want to go to-night. I feel like a fool. I told some of my most intimate friends what I meant to do, and now I am ashamed to face them."

Arthur Banting's reply showed that he had been driven to desperation.

"Well, you shall go to-night if I risk my chances with my uncle!" he said. "He can't do more than raise a row. Your father is bound to get his signature in the end, and once their business interests are common the duke will not really care."

"Oh, Arthur, how good you are!"

"Not at all. I'm only trying to please you."

"But how will you manage it?"

"We will take that boat and go out for a row. The sailing-master is away. Uncle is abed and none of the sailors dare interfere with me. Go down and get ready, pet. I'll have everything arranged by the time you are dressed."

Miss Hattie vanished.

The Hon. Arthur turned and examined the boat.

Harry was not there.

He had slipped away while their backs were turned.

"The duke must know of this," he determined. "That fellow is a desperate little scoundrel. He means bad. I'd like to bet that he means to lift some of the duke's cash. That he stole the diamonds there cannot be the least doubt."

But how to get at the duke was the question.

Twice Harry had looked down into the cabin.

Each time he saw Alphonse, the valet, seated in a chair in front of a certain stateroom door.

Of course, Alphonse was guarding his noble master.

To pass this watch-dog was the rub.

"I must take him into my confidence. It is the only way," determined Harry. "Perhaps he knows I am a detective. I should not be at all surprised."

The Hon. Arthur was pacing the deck now.

It struck Young King Brady that he looked exactly like a man who was trying to screw up his courage for some desperate deed.

Harry sauntered to the cabin door and managed to slip down the stairs unobserved by the sailors.

Alphonse looked up, curiously.

"Hist!" breathed Harry. "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes," replied Alphonse, in a low voice.

"Who am I?"

"One of the detectives in disguise."

"Right. Is the duke asleep?"

"I don't know."

"I must see him privately at once."

"You may, if he is willing. My orders are to announce you at any time."

"Good! Your master is a man of sense."

"My master is one of the greatest men of his time."

said Alphonse, drawing himself up, proudly, and he knocked on the stateroom door.

"It is I, Alphonse!" he said in answer to the duke's demand to know who was there.

The door was slightly opened.

"What's wanted?" demanded the duke.

"It is the young detective; he wants to come in, your grace."

"Admit him."

"And I want Alphonse to go on deck and keep out of sight until he is called," added Harry, hastily.

"Alphonse," said the duke, "you hear. Obey!"

Exit Alphonse.

Enter Young King Brady into the duke's stateroom.

"Don't lock the door," he breathed as the duke was about to turn the key.

"For heaven sake, what is going forward?" demanded the duke, who wore only a suit of pajamas. "What have you learned?"

"Mr. Underwood," said Harry, boldly, "I have learned a good deal; but I can impart none of it to you without the orders of my chief, unless you agree to do just as I direct."

"Why don't you ask your chief for orders? Or, better still, why don't he come?" replied the duke, testily. "I don't like being disturbed in my sleep, young man."

"It was necessary," said Harry, firmly. "I can't ask my chief for he is not here."

"Not here! That old man who came on board with you——"

"Is merely an assistant."

"I don't like this," said the duke, hotly. "If my business is to be turned over to assistants and boys——"

"Enough, Mr. Underwood!" broke in Harry. "I know my business and Old King Brady knows his. We have already found some of your diamonds and if you want the rest you must back me up now. Instantly, sir! A minute more of delay and it will be too late!"

There was something so earnest about Harry's manner that the Duke at once changed his tone.

"I agree," he said; "I will do just as you say."

"Then dress yourself immediately and be ready to go on deck. No; don't ring for Alphonse, that will spoil all. Your grace—I believe that's the correct way to address a duke—I am going to surprise you. Your nephew, Arthur Banting, is the person through who Old King Brady got those two diamonds."

"Arthur? Great heavens, no!" gasped the duke, clapping his hand to his forehead.

"Yes," said Harry. "Bear up, sir. Arthur Banting has secretly married Mr. Horton's daughter and they intend leaving this yacht together, in a few minutes' time."

"Oh! oh! oh!" gasped the duke.

He sank into a chair, his face grew fairly purple.

He gasped, but did not seem able to speak.

"Great Scott! What have I done?" thought Harry.

"This is certainly apoplexy! I'm afraid the old fellow is going to croak!"

CHAPTER VI.

OLD KING BRADY MAKES A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

The Reverend Mr. Lansing opened his eyes wide at the sight of the diamonds.

Evidently he was becoming interested himself.

"It looks as if that might be the stone," he replied, pointing to the largest diamond. "Still I know very little about such things."

"That is all, Mr. Lansing. Good-evening, sir!" said Old King Brady, starting to withdraw.

"Wait!" said Mr. Lansing. "Will it do for me to talk to Mr. Horton of all this?"

"You are entirely your own master, sir. Do as you please," replied Old King Brady. "It's nothing to me. Only if my advice was to be asked I should suggest keeping out of what promises to be a public scandal of a serious kind."

"You are quite right," said Mr. Lansing, hastily. "I shall certainly follow your advice."

Old King Brady then took his departure.

In the short time he had been working the detective had accomplished a great deal.

"It looks like Banting," he said to himself, "and yet if the fellow had stolen the bag of diamonds how would he dare to venture back to the yacht? It would take a cool old crook to do such a thing. On the whole, I am rather inclined to believe that we have not reached the bottom of this business yet."

But Old King Brady had a lot of work to do yet before he ended his labors for the night.

Hurrying to Fourth Avenue he jumped on a downtown car.

This took him down Centre Street and the detective left the car at Grand Street.

Passing on to a certain small jewelry store he entered.

A dried-up old man behind the show cases nodded to him as he came in.

"Well, Mr. Vallelly, anything doing?" asked the detective as he came in.

"Not yet, Brady," replied the old man.

"It is only half-past eight. There is still time."

"Yes?"

"I think so. I forget just how the advertisement read."

Old King Brady took from his pocket a certain evening paper which has a large circulation among Wall Street men.

"Here it is," he said, and he read as follows:

"FOUND—Two large and very valuable diamonds. These stones are known to have come from the steam yacht of some wealthy person. There is reason to believe that the name of the person, or of some one of his friends, is Campbellton. The diamonds can be had by paying charges and proving property. Apply to Vallelly, No. — Grand Street, this evening after seven o'clock. Any later application

will be useless as finder sails for Europe by to-morrow's steamer."

This was the advertisement.

It was a shrewd bait thrown out to catch the diamond thief.

At the time Old King Brady put it in all the principal evening papers he had no more reason to suspect the Hon. Arthur Banting of stealing the diamonds than any one else.

Now he looked for Banting to be the fish to snap at the bait.

But, on the other hand, fishing is altogether an uncertain business.

One can never tell what is coming on the hook.

Old King Brady was soon to learn that he was fishing in deeper waters than he knew.

"I don't believe there's anything into it," said Vallelly, who was not only an acquaintance of Old King Brady's, but an old fence as well. "No thief would ever dream of answering such an ad as that."

"No professional thief, Vallelly. I am not fishing for that sort; but I must get ready. My man may come at any minute and I want to be prepared."

"Step right into the back room," said the jeweler.

"Crane, the costumer, sent around the things?"

"Oh, yes! You will find everything there."

Old King Brady passed into the back room.

In a few moments he came out again, but no one would ever have known him for the same man.

The detective was rigged up as a mechanic out of a job.

His clothes were decent, but much patched. A stubby red beard covered his face.

There was nothing remarkable about his appearance.

On the contrary he was just such a person as one meets at every turn.

"Well, Vallelly, do I look all right?" he asked.

"Indeed you do! Shouldn't never know you. Brady, you are a wonderful man!"

"I'm nothing of the sort," laughed the detective. "You can take a watch to pieces and put it together again, something which I could not do to save my life. I can so disguise myself that detection is not easy. You would find it very hard to do that."

"Well, that's so, I suppose," replied Vallelly.

"How long can you keep open?"

"Midnight if necessary."

"Eleven o'clock will do. There will be nothing doing after that."

"Say, Brady, there's a man over on the other side of the street, looking pretty sharp at the store, now," said the jeweler suddenly.

"By Jove! I'm up against it!" cried the detective darting in behind the curtain which cut off the back room.

"Say, he's coming over!" called Vallelly.

"Take the diamonds," said Old King Brady, handing them out from behind the curtain. "Mind he don't get 'em away from you now; but I needn't tell you."

"Teach a weasel how to suck eggs!" chuckled Vallelly. An instant later the store door opened and a short, stout, elderly man, dressed in a cheap business suit with no signs of wealth about him stepped into the store.

There was no particular attempt at disguise.

Mr. Man was J. Q. Horton, the Wall Street banker.

But instead of being dressed like a banker he was rigged out like a canvasser or a clerk—that was all.

Old King Brady had recognized him at first glance.

Yet now that he was here he could scarcely believe his eyes as he peered out from behind the curtain.

True, Horton, the banker, might have seen the ad and have been seized with the notion to look into the matter with perfectly honest intentions.

But how about this cheap attempt at disguise?

"Good-evening, sir!" he said, civilly, as he walked up to the showcase. "I called in answer to an advertisement about two diamonds found."

Oh, how different was the humble manner in which these words were spoken, from the lofty tone assumed by the mighty financier on board his own yacht!

"Well?" replied Vallelly, in his gruffest tone.

"A friend of mine had the misfortune to lose two diamonds, and he asked me to call, not being able to come himself," Mr. Horton went on to say.

"Yes."

"Can I see them?"

"Not until you have described them."

"I can't very well do that, for I never saw the diamonds."

"Then you can't see them now. Better send your friend."

"It is impossible for him to come."

"That's not my business."

"In fact, he is no friend, only a man I do business for. He is staying on a yacht. I might get him to-morrow, but not to-night."

"To-morrow will be too late."

"So the advertisement stated. You sail for Europe——"

"I do not. These diamonds I did not find. They were found by a friend of mine. It is he who sails."

"Where were they found?"

"If it was me I wouldn't tell. He told me to tell the whole story, and I shall answer any questions. They were found on the seat of a steam launch at the Battery stairs, wrapped in paper."

"Have you a description of the launch?"

"No."

"Why did you think that it belonged to a Mr. Campbellton?"

"The men standing around said so."

"Was no one in charge of the launch?"

"No."

"How came your friend to find the diamonds?"

"He had a water dog which had been swimming. The

dog would not come out, and my friend went down the steps to call him."

"I see. And noticed the diamonds lying on the seat?"

"Yes."

"He must have had a lot of curiosity to pick up what seemed to be only a bit of paper."

"Two bits of paper. He has no curiosity at all. The fact is he got into the launch in order to grab the dog and sat down on them."

"I see."

"He felt."

"Ha! Yes. Well, I have no doubt they are the missing gems. I am here prepared to pay liberally for them if I could see them and be satisfied that they were the stones."

"Would you pay their full value?"

"Certainly not."

"You don't get them on any other condition."

"Suppose I get a policeman?"

"Try it, if you dare!"

The curtain shook.

This was a signal.

It meant "show the diamonds, but don't let them go out of your hands."

"I shall certainly try it. I have a right to see the stones."

"Well, then, look at them from a distance. I shan't let you examine them closely, and you needn't ask it."

Vallelly produced the diamonds.

Mr. Horton regarded them with an eager eye.

"I have no doubt they are the stones," he said.

"One is flawed, and the other off color," said Vallelly. "Tell me how, and you get them for the price of the ad and whatever reward you choose to give."

"I can't do it."

"Then you don't get the diamonds, and I don't waste any more time talking—see?"

"You shall hear from me, Mister Man!" thundered Horton, breaking out into his natural manner at last. "You are an infernal old fence! That's what you are. In some way you have managed to learn that those diamonds were lost in Campbellton's launch, but they were never found there. I shall soon bring you to terms!"

He banged out of the store and was gone.

"Good for you, Vallelly!" cried Old King Brady, springing out from behind the curtain. "Well done!"

He seized the diamonds, tossed Vallelly a ten dollar bill and hurriedly left the place.

"I was fishing for a herring and I caught a whale!" muttered Old King Brady. "Now what can it all mean?"

Banker Horton was making for the Bowery with a swinging gait, and Old King Brady made for the Bowery, too.

"What on earth is taking him in this direction?" he thought. "He may be going to police headquarters, however. Of course, he only has to show himself there to get whatever he wants."

But Mr. Horton evidently was not bound for police headquarters.

He crossed Mulberry Street, Mott and Elizabeth, and turned down the Bowery, with all the confidence of a man thoroughly at home.

Old King Brady, hurrying along on the other side of the street, quickened his pace to a run.

This was the critical moment.

If he lost sight of Mr. Horton now all was lost.

But no! There was the banker on ahead.

To shadow him now was an easy thing.

Old King Brady thought fast.

He remembered that it had always been claimed by the yellow journals that when a young man, Banker Horton ran a policy shop on the Bowery, with old coins and lottery tickets in the windows, and a huge safe in the back.

True, this had been denied, but it is easy to deny anything; and if a man has money his denial is pretty apt to be believed by those who want to believe it, if by no one else.

Old King Brady hurried on, trying to get nearer to his man.

Mr. Horton proved himself a pretty good walker for a man sixty odd years of age, and never seen on the street except in a carriage or automobile.

Old King Brady had all he could do to come up with him.

He had scarcely accomplished this when Mr. Horton suddenly made a dive into a cigar store and disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REMARKABLE CONDUCT OF MR. J. Q. HORTON.

Old King Brady stopped and stared in through the window at the cigars and pipes.

Surely the high and mighty Mr. Horton was conducting himself in a very remarkable way.

If Old King Brady had not known that the banker was absolutely sober he would have thought that liquor was responsible for it all.

With his hat on the back of his head, Horton was shaking hands with the cigar man, and they stood there chatting like old friends.

Then the banker bought a dollar's worth of cigars and there was more talk.

Old King Brady longed to sneak into the store and find out what it was all about, but he felt that the time to show himself had not yet come.

Now Mr. Horton was coming out again.

Old King Brady dodged across the street.

This time he made a mistake.

Mr. Horton shot across the street, too.

Old King Brady fell behind.

He saw the banker keep on down the Bowery to Bayard Street.

Here he shot into a terrible joint—a saloon where al-

leged whisky was sold at five cents a tumblerful, and stale beer for three cents a glass.

Here Old King Brady ventured to enter.

The place was full of old panhandlers of the worst kind.

Mr. Horton was down by the end of the bar, shaking hands with the proprietor.

Old King Brady ventured as close to him as he dared, and ordered beer.

"Why, I hain't seen you in a long while, Josh!" the divekeeper was saying.

"That's right," Horton replied.

"Where do you keep yourself all the while? Why don't you never come down on the Bowery and see the boys?"

"Busy from morning till night, Barney, that's why."

"They say you are worth millions, Josh."

"My fortune is greatly exaggerated. It's come easy go easy and my expenses are enormous."

"Ah! That's it. If it wasn't for expenses I'd blame soon get rich here. I'm coming in to see you some day, Josh. I want you to show me how they do it on Wall Street."

"That's right, that's right. Got any champagne?"

"Not a bottle. There hain't no call for none of that stuff here."

A horrible hurdy-gurdy broke out with the latest rag-time, on Bayard Street.

The noise was deafening.

Old King Brady could no longer hear what was being said.

His eyes served him, however.

He saw Horton slip the divekeeper a twenty-dollar bill.

The tune changed.

In the instant of silence between the two tunes, Old King Brady caught these words from Horton:

"Then you think Ike Brandy is my man?"

He knew by the saloonkeeper's manner that he assented.

He saw that Horton was getting ready to leave.

Old King Brady shot out through the Bayard Street door.

"It's taking big chances of losing him altogether," he thought, "but I'd be right in it if what I suspect is true."

Without looking behind him Old King Brady hurried around into Chrystie Street.

The detective was now in one of the worst quarters of New York.

Chrystie Street above Bayard, for a block or two, is what one might call neutral ground.

It is just outside of the Chinese quarter.

It is just before one comes to the Polish Jew quarter.

It is just across the Bowery from the Italian quarter.

Years ago it was part of the Irish quarter, and some few of that nationality remain there still.

But to what nation Ike Brandy belonged it would be hard to tell.

Some claimed that Ike Brandy was the oldest beggar in New York.

His hair was snow white and his face horribly wrinkled.

He was stone blind and had hideous white eyes.

One leg was gone and an old-fashioned wooden leg occupied its place.

One arm was also gone and a wooden arm, with a hook at the end, did business instead.

But in spite of the fact that he was only a fragment of a man, so to speak, Ike Brandy kept his tall form erect and displayed a decided soldierly bearing.

In old times Ike could have been seen any day on the Bowery with a little tin pail, half full of pennies, hanging to his hook, led by a dog that barked continuously, and snapped at the heels of the pedestrians to make them keep out of the way.

Ike Brandy grew rich begging.

Years before he had given it up and went into other business.

Ike's business was to make beggars.

He knew all the tricks of the trade.

Blind as he was, no one would fix up a better "flopper" or "squatter." Ike was away up in the mysteries of making fearful sores out of putty, or tying back an arm so as to make the elbow look like an amputated stump.

Besides all this, dark stories were told of Ike Brandy's doings.

Many believed that his underground den on Chrystie Street was not only a resort for beggars, but for burglars, pickpockets and all-around crooks as well.

Every detective in New York, worthy of the name, knew Ike Brandy, and Old King Brady was no exception.

When Old King Brady hurried down the steps leading to Ike Brandy's cellar, which he did a few minutes later, there was the old beggar himself standing in the doorway.

"Halt!" he cried in an instant. "Who goes there?"

Ike was said to have been a deserter from the British army. At all events, this was always his way.

"A friend!" replied Old King Brady.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"Ike, you're the same old sixpence. The countersign is cold cash, dough, ducats, any old name for the real thing, providing we can come to quick terms."

"I know you, now," said the blind man. "I never forget a voice. You are Old King Brady."

"No one else."

"Am I wanted?"

"Not by me. Not that I know of. It is I who want your help."

"Right! You shall have it. You are a square man. What's up?"

"In a few minutes a man will come here to see you. I want you to hide me so that I can hear all that he says."

"Consider it done. Who is this man?"

"Josh Horton, the banker."

"The deuce you say!"

"You know him?"

"Used to when he dealt policy on the Bowery. He's one of the 400 now."

"Is he straight or crooked?"

"Crooked as blazes."

"Does he ever come on the Bowery to see his old friends?"

"Once in a great while."

"Suppose they go to Wall Street to see him?"

"They never do. It has been tried. He would swear that he never knew me if I was to go to his office. That's Josh."

"Hide me, quick, Ike!" said the detective. "The man is up to some trick or other. I have an idea that he wants help to carry it out. Now mind what I tell you, if such is the case, count me in. I'm the man; do as I tell you and you shall be well paid."

"Right. Slip behind that closet door, Brady. I hear heavy footsteps coming up the street, and something tells me that it's Josh."

There were three rooms to Ike Brandy's cellar.

The front one was the old blind man's personal quarters. In the rear the beggars congregated.

There seemed to be a lot of them in the place now.

Old King Brady could hear them laughing and talking.

Just as he went into the closet a lame man hobbled through with a growler, and went out after beer.

Ike Brandy stumped over to the dividing door.

"Hey, you fellers inside there!" he shouted. "You want to keep in yer place and not be coming through here for a little while. I'm expecting company, and don't want to be disturbed!"

"All right, papa!" a hoarse, beery voice replied.

Ike Brandy closed the door and stumped back to the cellar steps, just in time to meet Mr. Horton coming down.

Certainly this night slumming was very remarkable conduct on the part of the great financier.

Instead of remaining on his palatial yacht and entertaining his noble guest he preferred visiting among panhandlers and crooks, in the worst slum in New York.

"What would the Duke of Westmoreland think if he could see Horton now?" Old King Brady said to himself. "I'd like to be able to read that man's mind. I can't make out his game at all."

One thing, however, soon became pretty well settled in the detective's mind and this was that the great J. Q. Horton, in his day, had been little better than a professional thief.

"Ike, how de do?" was the banker's greeting. "You used to say you never forgot a voice. Do you know mine? Do you remember me?"

"Stop a minute," replied Ike. "Let me think. Speak again."

"Three—twenty-one—forty-nine!" cried Horton.

"Ah, ha! I know you now. Josh Horton, you old scoundrel! How have you been these many years?"

"Well; very well! I see you haven't forgotten the old gig on which you pulled my leg for five hundred. Those were jolly times, Ike."

"They were, so. Wisht they was back again. They tell me, Josh, that you're rolling in wealth."

The banker's face grew dark.

Old King Brady saw it from behind the closet door.

"Don't you believe all you hear!" he said. "Ike, I'm a great liar, as you know."

"You auster be, all right."

"And I am still; but I'm going to tell you the truth now. I have made millions and dropped them. I am believed by all the world to be worth upward of a hundred million dollars to-day, but the truth is I am on the verge of bankruptcy and if I go down, dozens will go with me, and a financial panic will follow which will shake the country from Maine to California. Ike, I stand like a man with a sword hanging over his head, suspended by a thread. At any instant the thread may break. That sword must be removed. You can help me. Do as I ask and I'll give you a hundred dollars now. If I succeed, as I hope to, and as I believe, I shall, Ike, old chum, set you up in just the sort of crib to suit you. I'll buy the property and give it to you. I'll furnish it in any way you please, and besides that I'll give you one thousand dollars in cold cash."

"It's a big bid, Josh. I'm your man. What is it you want?"

"Outbid, by thunder!" thought Old King Brady. "Nothing but fear will make Ike work for me now."

"It is this," said Mr. Horton, throwing himself into a chair: "I have a yacht lying in the bay, commanded by a sailing-master who stands ready to be blind to anything and everything that may happen on board for the next few days. What I want is a crew, commanded by a man who fears no one. A man who for the time being will turn pirate or murderer, if necessary. A crew of ten, Ike, every one sworn to obey his will in the most minute particular. I shall want them for about three days. Now, then, how about helping me out?"

"I can do it," said Ike, promptly. "I know the very man."

"Good! When can I see him?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow won't do. It must be to-night."

"I can get him to-night. Can you come here at twelve o'clock?"

"Too late. I want him within an hour's time."

"Be here in an hour's time."

"What's the matter with my stopping here?"

"No. This is a rough house, Josh. I don't want trouble. You might be recognized. Better go."

"As you will. Can that man have the crew here at the same time?"

"Perhaps."

"Try and fix it so."

"Wait!"

"Well?"

"How do they get to the yacht?"

"There's a steam launch waiting at the foot of Rutger's Slip."

"By the dry dock?"

"Yes."

"The men shall be there if possible. I don't want them to come here."

"Very good! Here's your hundred, Ike, and now good-night!"

He was gone!

Old King Brady glided out of the closet.

"Brady! Come out, Brady!" called Ike.

"I am here."

"Ha! And I never heard you. What do you think of that?"

"I understand it. Ike Brady, are you my man or his?"

"Yours for cash, Brady. The old liar! He set me up in a saloon! Ha! Don't I know him! He'd sic the cops onto me—that's what he'd do! Yours for cash, Brady, or I drop it. How much do you bid?"

"I'll be liberal," said Old King Brady. "Do as I direct, Ike, and if we trip Horton up in his rascality it's a thousand dollars, the very sum he named. If we fail it's five hundred. No cash until the game is played."

"Done; and there's my hand on it!" said Ike, heartily. "And this crew that he wants. Am I to get 'em or are you?"

"Oh, leave the crew to me, Ike!" chuckled the old detective. "I know the very men. I'll run out and get them and send them to Rutger's Slip. Look for me in an hour's time."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK ON THE PIXIE.

Young King Brady was prompt to act in the case of the Duke of Westmoreland.

If it had been otherwise there is little doubt that his grace would have choked to death.

Harry raised him up and threw water in his face.

The shock seemed to do the business, and the duke revived.

"You have nearly killed me," he said. "Still I thank you. I am no fool and don't want to be written down as one."

"Then listen to me, sir," said Harry: "and for heaven sake let us be quick. Return to your bed: pretend to be asleep. Hide me here in this stateroom for ten minutes or so, and let the truth or falsity of my statement that Arthur Banting is a thief stand or fall on the result."

"Done," said the Duke. "The boy has made his bed: let him lie in it. If he is married to this girl the marriage stands, but my negotiations with Horton are all off. So much for a peer of the realm attempting to deal with a yankee tradesman on terms of equality. Nothing but trouble could come of it. I might have known."

The duke got into the bed, and Young King Brady slipped into the bath-room, which opened off the stateroom.

Silence reigned for several minutes.

At last stealthy footsteps were heard outside.

Harry held his breath, watching out through the crack of the door.

"Bully for his grace!" he muttered. "He has actually got on a snore. He'd make an actor. Hang me if he wouldn't—but here the play begins!"

The door of the duke's stateroom was softly opened.

The Hon. Arthur Banting slipped in.

It was now dark, for the duke had turned off the electric light.

Still the moon was at her full and enough light came in through the dead-lights to show Harry what the rascal was about.

He was about to burgle—that was what!

The duke's portmanteau, an expensive leather affair, stood in one corner, and Arthur Banting, after listening carefully to his uncle's breathing, dropped on his knees beside it.

He was provided with a cold chisel which he must have picked up in the engine-room.

It was plain to see that he was there to break into the duke's portmanteau, but it was not done!

"Oh, I say, Arthur, don't spoil me boxes!" called the duke's voice out of the darkness.

Suddenly pressing the electric light button, his grace filled the stateroom with a flood of light.

At the same time the duke stepped out of bed.

The words which escaped the lips of the Hon. Arthur Banting would not look well in print.

Young King Brady's first idea had been to jump in at the expose.

The duke, however, had anticipated him.

To a certain extent this had become a family affair.

Harry determined to wait until he was called.

Instead of reproaching Banting, the duke sat down on the side of the bed and lighted a cigarette.

"Smoke, Arthur?" he asked, passing the gold case.

"No."

"So sorry! Now, what have you to say for yourself, boy?"

"Nothing."

"Wise! You were trying to rob me?"

"I need money. A fellow can't keep his end up on wind. It costs more——"

"To keep a wife than to do it single," drawled the duke.

"Quite true, Arty! Quite true!"

"Why, he's immense!" thought Young King Brady. "I thought from the first he was a good fellow. I know it now."

"What do you mean?" demanded Banting, fiercely.

"Oh, I say, put down that jimmy. I believe that's what you call it; my family aren't quite as well educated in burgling as we ought to be, so you will excuse me if I make a mistake."

"Who told you?" cried Banting, putting the cold chisel in his pocket.

"Never mind, you young spendthrift!" cried the duke, suddenly changing front. "I know. You are married to Horton's daughter! You have done exactly what I told you not to do. To carry this out you have robbed me of my diamonds and now you would rob me of ten thousand

pounds in Bank of England notes, which you know I have in my portmanteau. It's all over between us, Arthur. I cast you off forever. Take the Horton girl and go to the deuce with her for all I care. Not a penny of my money shall you ever finger. Your own funds in my charge have long since been exhausted by your extravagance. You scratch a poor man's head to-day, my lad, and you may thank your stars that my respect for my wife, your aunt, prevents my turning you over to the police, which I shall not do if you give up the diamonds; and which I surely will do in case you are fool enough to refuse."

During this long speech Young King Brady attentively watched Banting's face.

He saw a hard, wicked look come into the boy's eyes.

"That fellow is like the dog that don't bark. He means mischief," he muttered, and held himself ready for a spring.

"I never stole your bag of diamonds, uncle!" said Banting, in a hard voice. "I have nothing to give up, heaven knows! If you can find tuppence about me you will do well. I'll be blest if I think I've got that much."

"Liar!" cried the duke. "Two of the diamonds dropped by you have already been found! Where are the rest?"

"Found!" cried Banting.

"I said it."

"By whom?"

"The Bradys, detectives."

"For heaven sake, where?"

"In the steam launch of Campbellton's, Horton's partner, where you dropped them, I suppose."

Banting burst out with a fierce exclamation.

"Look here!" he cried. "You called me a liar, and I didn't knock you over. Well, I am a liar; but now I'm going to tell the truth and put it up to you to save me from ruin and disgrace. I did not steal your bag of diamonds there in the dark last night, and I don't know who did, although I believed Alphonse to be the thief. The night before I did come into this stateroom while you slept and stole two diamonds out of the bag. These I tried to pawn, to meet my wedding expenses. I failed. I started back with Hattie, whom I had then married. When I got on board the Pixie I discovered to my horror that there was a hole in my pocket and the two diamonds were missing. That is absolutely all I know."

"And this is really true, Arthur?" demanded the duke.

"It is; believe it or not, still it is. Now, uncle, for heaven sake help us. Lend me five hundred pounds. Horton is sure to come down handsomely in a few days. Help me to keep my end up and I swear I will turn over a new leaf and reform."

"I will do nothing of the sort!" flashed the duke. "I know you now, Arthur Banting! You are a liar and a thief! Out of my sight! I will hear no more. You did steal the diamonds and they shall be found, if I have to search this yacht with my own hands, from stem to stern!"

"You have pronounced your own doom, old man!" cried

Banting, suddenly drawing the cold chisel from his pocket and making a rush at the duke.

It would surely have been a case of murder if Young King Brady had not interfered.

Quick as lightning he jumped on Banting from behind.

He had him on the floor before he knew it, and snapped a pair of handcuffs about his wrists before one could count three.

"Hold him! Hold him!" panted the duke, while this was going on. "He would have murdered me! Oh, the wretch! Not even my wife's influence shall make me spare him now!"

Not a word from Banting.

The duke asked him a question about a matter which Young King Brady did not understand, but he made no reply.

"Speak, you rascal!" shouted the duke, bursting with rage.

"Yes, now and for the last time," said Banting. "I did not steal the bag of diamonds. I am legally married to Horton's daughter. My time will come yet. That's all."

And it was all.

Not another word would be uttered, though the duke pressed him hard.

"What is to be done with him, Brady?" demanded the duke.

"That is for you to decide, your grace."

"I am resolved to jail him."

"The sailing-master is away; the owner of the yacht is away. We shall be obliged to wait."

"Not at all. I shall take command here. This robbery took place while we were still in Narragansett Bay; that is within the jurisdiction of the State of Rhode Island. Back to Newport we go, and there he shall be jailed."

"Very good, sir. And who is to command the yacht?"

"One of the men. Whoever seems to understand it best."

"Let me make a suggestion."

"Certainly."

"Detective Russell, my assistant, is an expert yachtsman. Place him in charge."

"It shall be done. Now about this fellow's wife. Where is she at the present time?"

"Dressing in her stateroom. It was their intention to secretly leave the yacht and go to Canada together. I was hiding in the lifeboat and overheard it all."

"The rascal!"

"The plan was hers. She urged him on. He would have postponed it all until some other time."

"Lock the girl in her stateroom until we get started. I will have a talk with her then."

"Very well; and this young man?"

"Not man! There isn't a spark of manhood in his make-up! Take him to his own stateroom and leave him there. Alphonse shall assist you. Oblige me by calling Alphonse. Then if it is in your power, resume your usual costume and be the detective again. Can you do this?"

"I can."

"Do it, then."

"It shall be done, your grace," replied Young King Brady, and he withdrew.

Once in the cabin Harry made one of his lightning changes.

He was himself again inside of two minutes.

Then he went on deck and called Alphonse.

Every one started.

The watch could not comprehend how the detective had come to be on board.

Alphonse and Harry returned to the stateroom together.

To Young King Brady's amazement he found the Hon. Arthur Banting standing up, talking to the duke in low, confidential tones.

They had patched it up together; why or how, Young King Brady never learned.

"Mr. Brady," said the duke, "I am satisfied that I have made a mistake. Arthur did not steal the diamonds—that is, the bag. He did not mean to murder me. As for the rest—well, Mr. Brady, this is a family matter. Oblige me by removing the handcuffs. I am not criticising your work in any way, but I do not care to go forward with it any further."

"You know best, your grace," replied Young King Brady. "Is it your wish that I should give up the diamond case?"

"No. I want the diamonds. I suggest that you wait here till your chief comes aboard, and Mr. Horton returns. We will then hold a consultation and decide what to do."

"Very well, sir," replied Harry.

He removed the handcuffs, bowed and withdrew.

Of course, he felt rather chagrined.

He had played strong cards and seemed in the act of winning the game.

It did seem too much to have it all overturned.

There was nothing for Harry to do but to give up, however.

He went on deck and walked aft.

There, in a minute, Russell joined him.

"What in thunder is the matter?" he demanded. "What is all this about?"

Harry told him.

"I'd pull up stakes and leave," said Russell, highly indignant. "Blamed if I'd be made a fool of like that!"

"No," said Harry. "I am here, and here to stay."

"But——"

"No use talking, Russell. I obey orders even if I break owners. I was told to wait here until Old King Brady came, and that's what I propose to do."

"All right, Harry. It's nothing to me."

"Of course not. How are things going on board?"

"Every man of the crew is demoralized."

"No!"

"Yes, indeed."

"But how? Why?"

"Hain't been paid a cent of wages in three months."

"Come, that's serious!"

"So serious that they are all talking about quitting. They think the sailing-master has quit as it is."

"You don't say!"

"Yes."

"But this is very strange."

"Well, I don't know. Some of them big guns is blame slow about paying their bills, as I happen to know to my cost."

"That's no dream."

"Bet your life it hain't. Well, Harry, I guess I'll get back to my post. One of us better keep dark. They don't seem to suspect me yet."

"Get back. I'll sit here and wait for the boss. He can't be long away now."

But midnight came and passed and brought no Old King Brady.

Nor did the owner of the Pixie return, and the sailing-master also remained away.

Nothing was seen of the duke nor any of the party.

Dinner was served as usual.

Who attended it, Harry did not ask, but chancing to get a peep down through the skylight he saw the duke doing honors at the head of the table, while the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Banting sat at the side.

They seemed to be very social together.

"It takes the wind out of my sails," thought Harry. "I can't get on to their curves at all."

After midnight Young King Brady lay down on a settee and went to sleep.

He had had no other place assigned to him, and did not know what to do or where to go.

Russell was on the watch, and it was arranged that he should call Harry if he was needed, or in case Old King Brady came.

Harry was off in five minutes and slept the best part of two hours when he was suddenly aroused by hearing Russell shout:

"Keep off! Keep off! Mind where you are steering or you'll run us down!"

A large steam launch was shooting toward the yacht.

She carried no light, and was crowded with men.

"Heavens! What does this mean?" cried Young King Brady as the launch came steadily on.

"Blamed if I don't think they are a gang of bloody pirates!" cried Russell.

"That's what they are, sure!" echoed the bow watch.

"Call the watch below, young feller!" cried Russell. "This business has a bad look!"

"What in thunder are you fellows trying to do?" shouted Harry.

The launch was almost up to the yacht now.

There was no answer nor did the launch alter her course.

"This is a private yacht!" shouted Harry. "You want to cheer off or we'll make some of you fellows sick!"

"We don't care a hang, kid, how private it is!" replied a grizzled old fellow who sat in the stern. "Don't you

try to monkey with us. We're coming aboard. This is the boy what does the business—see!"

Suddenly raising a rifle he covered Young King Brady.

And the launch drove straight on toward the Pixie.

Harry ran and turned the searchlight upon the launch.

A tougher-looking set of men he had never seen.

All were armed with rifles, revolvers and knives.

CHAPTER IX.

PRISONERS ON THE YACHT

"Alphonse! Alphonse!"

Running into the cabin Young King Brady roused the duke's valet, who was sound asleep in his chair.

"What's the matter?" demanded Alphonse, excitedly springing to his feet.

"Pirates! They mean to board us. Better wake up the duke!"

Alphonse began pounding on the duke's door.

At the same instant a piercing scream was heard from the next stateroom.

Evidently Mrs. Banting was getting excited.

The door flew open and the Hon. Arthur, wearing pajamas, thrust half his body out.

"Hey, you detective fellow! What's going forward?" he called, in a most insulting way.

"Pirates!" said Young King Brady. "Come to cut your throats!"

"Oh! oh! oh!" shrieked Mrs. Banting. "Oh, we shall all be killed! Out of my way, Arthur! Don't try to stop me. I tell you I must go!"

To Young King Brady's astonishment and doubtless somewhat to the Hon. Arthur's, too, the bride, wearing only her night robe rushed out of the stateroom and ran across the cabin.

She carried a key in her hand. With this she opened the door of the stateroom on the other side and disappeared within.

Young King Brady heard her lock the door behind her.

"Leave the cabin, you fellow!" bawled Banting. "Why do you stand staring there?"

"Hold your jaw or I'll handcuff you again!" retorted Harry, sternly.

At the same instant Mrs. Banting opened the stateroom door and carrying some small object wrapped in a towel, ran back to her husband's stateroom and popped in.

Meanwhile a terrible racket was going on overhead.

The "pirates" had evidently come aboard the yacht.

Alphonse had disappeared inside the duke's stateroom. Harry hurried on deck.

It was as he expected.

The sailors had all been captured and were ranged in line, guarded with rifles.

A tall, grizzled old fellow, with a croppy beard, wear-

ing a pea-jacket and a slouch hat, seemed to be the leader of the band.

"Now, my men," he called out, in a high-pitched voice, "there's no use making any trouble. We happen to know that the Duke of Westmoreland is on board this yacht. We want him and all his party. As for the rest of you, take the launch and go where you will with it. The first man who attempts to interfere with us will be promptly shot. Where's the engineer and the cook? We want them, too."

The engineer and cook were hunted up and made to stand in line with the rest.

"There's a couple of valets on board. We want them," said the leader. "Hunt 'em up."

Four men went into the cabin.

They soon came out with the wretched Alphonse, who was as white as a sheet.

Dick Ring, Horton's valet, they did not get, for he had gone ashore with the sailing-master and had not returned.

The pirate leader now forced the crew, engineer, cook and Alphonse to get into the launch.

This was done at the point of the rifle.

One of the pirates now went to the little brass cannon at the bow of the yacht and swung it around so that it covered the launch.

"Sheer off, now, you fellows!" cried the leader. "Lose no time or we'll blow you to blazes! Git!"

The engineer who had, by orders, taken charge of the launch, started away.

The *Pixie* was now in full possession of the pirates.

Neither the duke nor the Bantings had shown themselves.

These, with Young King Brady, were the only ones of the original company left on board the yacht.

Not a word had been spoken to Harry.

None of the pirates had even looked at him.

During all that went on they passed him by as though he had not existed.

And really but for this fact Harry's suspicions would never have been aroused.

When he saw how things were going, it set him to thinking, and he studied the pirate leader closely.

"His disguise is immense! Simply immense!" thought Young King Brady. "But it's only the governor, after all!"

And yet in spite of his strong suspicions he did not feel quite sure of it.

"If the pirate leader really was Old King Brady, why had he sent Russell away?" he argued.

"I'll say nothing and saw wood," thought Harry. "It's so hard to get on to all Old King Brady's curves that one can't feel quite sure."

Meanwhile the "pirates" were spreading themselves all over the yacht, except the cabin. No one entered there.

The leader seemed to be a man of prompt action.

He ordered one man to the engine-room, another to the wheel, another still to the galley, and so on.

Then came the order to raise anchor and get under way.

In less than ten minutes the *Pixie* was steaming up the Sound.

During all these operations Harry sat on the starboard bench, quietly smoking.

Soon after the start a heavy footstep was heard on the cabin stairs and the Duke came on deck.

He looked pale but determined.

Sweeping his eye over the deck it rested on the grizzled old leader.

"Are you the captain of this crew as at present constituted?" he asked, in a firm voice.

"I am," was the reply.

"May I ask what all this means?"

"You may."

"And do you propose to answer?"

"I do."

"Then tell me. You have seized Mr. Horton's yacht by force, you have driven off all the crew. What——"

"Wait!" broke in the leader. "This is a case of kidnapping. You are a high and mighty English lord, as we understand it. The daughter of Horton, the banker, is here, too. We want ransom. I'm not the boss of this business. We left him in New York to work Horton. I'm to work you."

"Then you are a gang of pirates."

"Speak us fair, my lord, speak us fair."

"What am I expected to do?"

"To pay me the neat little sum of one hundred thousand dollars or——"

"Absurd!" broke in the duke.

"Say your say."

"Hear the 'or' first."

"Say your say."

"Or become food for the fishes after ten days. Many a better man than you has been found floating dead in Long Island Sound. I'm told it is an easy death. These men are all sworn to obey me, my lord, and I have sworn to obey my principal. There is no escape for you."

"I will never pay!" stormed the Duke. "This is an outrage. It is cause enough to create war between England and America. I——"

The leader laughed.

"Better calm down, old man!" he cried. "This hifalutin' talk won't do no sort of good."

"Where are you going to take us?"

"To a snug little crib up on the north shore of Long Island that I happen to know about. Nobody will ever find you there, not if they was to search a hundred years."

"Outrage! Outrage!" stormed the duke. "If I had ever dreamed of such treatment I would never have come to this infernal country."

"Looker here," said the old leader, "talk won't do you any good unless you talk turkey, or, in other words, plank down the dough. Think about it. Talk to your friends in the cabin about it. Meanwhile you are to be well treated. Them's my orders. Breakfast will be served as usual."

One of my boys is a bully cook. Another will do the steward act. Speak him fair and there won't be nothing to complain of. In short, old man, it all depends upon yourself."

Having said this the leader turned away.

The duke, after a moment's hesitation, dove down into the cabin again and disappeared.

He had no sooner gone than the leader walked over to Harry and looked him full in the eye.

"Governor!" whispered Young King Brady, in a hushed voice.

"You didn't know me at first. I actually deceived you."

"That's what you did. What does all this mean?"

"I tell you what, my boy, it meant serious business before I took hold."

"Was there such a plot?"

"There was."

"And how came you to be the leader?"

"I can't explain now. I am not the leader, however. I'm only the second in command. Only thing I regret is that there is nothing doing in the matter of the duke's diamonds, and that's the case we undertook."

"Who was telling you there was nothing doing in the matter of the duke's diamonds?" breathed Harry, in a still lower voice.

"Ha! You don't mean to say——"

"I mean to say that at last I have a clew."

"What is it?"

"I don't dare to raise my voice even loud enough to make you hear as you stand there. Sit down and I'll whisper in your ear."

Harry's whisper could not have been heard a foot away.

"Upon my word, I believe you are right," replied Old King Brady.

"I'm sure of it. What am I to do?"

"Let the matter rest now. Join the duke."

"To hear is to obey. I'm not to speak to you again, I suppose?"

"Not unless you are spoken to. The climax of all this business will soon come."

The Bradys separated, then.

Old King Brady was playing a shrewd game, but not a dangerous one.

Danger there had been at the start, but that was all over now.

Harry hurried into the cabin to find the duke, and Mr. and Mrs. Banting seated around the table looking very glum.

"I say, you detective fellow!" drawled Banting, inserting his monocle or single eye-glass in his eye. "Is this a put-up job of yours? Is this a game to——"

"Silence, Arthur!" cried the duke. "Are you mad? You don't seem to understand your situation."

"I believe it is as I say," persisted Arthur.

"Hold your tongue!" snapped the duke.

"Mr. Brady," he added, "do you know anything of this queer business? Is it part of any plan of yours?"

"Your grace, I give you my word that I know nothing.

I was as much surprised as you were to see these fellows come aboard."

"I was in hopes it was otherwise," said the duke, gloomily, "seeing that they did not send you off with the rest."

"Probably they took Mr. Brady for one of our party," said Mrs. Banting, who seemed to take the matter very coolly.

"They must be a lot of blooming idiots to do anything of the sort," drawled Banting.

"Tut, tut, Arthur!" said the duke. "Don't you be an idiot. Young Brady is a better-looking fellow than you, any day in the week."

"I'm not interested," said Harry. "It seems to me that under the circumstances the best thing Mr. Bantam can do is to keep his insulting remarks to himself."

Banting bristled.

So did Mrs. B.

"I'll let you know, you horrid, rude fellow, that my husband's name is Banting and not Bantam!" she cried.

"I think I know your husband better than you do, Mrs. Bantling!" chuckled Harry, who was a bit of a tease.

"Enough! Enough!" cried the duke. "Young Brady, what is to be done?"

"If your grace will take my advice you will do nothing at all; simply submit."

"You don't mean that I should pay this outrageous blackmail or whatever you call it?"

"I say nothing at all, and I mean nothing at all. Pay nothing, say nothing, do nothing; that's my advice."

"But suppose they carry out their threats and kill me?"

"They never will! Mrs. Banting knows that."

"What do you mean, sir, by your insinuations?" bawled Banting.

"Ask Mrs. B.," replied Harry, lighting a cigarette.

The duke said nothing.

Banting hauled in his horns.

Mrs. Banting turned red and pale, and then red again.

"The governor is right, as usual," thought Harry as he blew smoke rings at Banting. "She knows all."

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD STONE HOUSE IN THE HOLLOW.

"That's the place, Harry!"

Old King Brady put his hand upon his pupil's shoulder and pointed over into the deep hollow between the big sand bluffs.

There the gables of an ancient stone house could just be seen peeping over the rise.

"So that's to be our prison?" asked Harry.

"That's it!"

"How long are we in for?"

"It will be only a matter of a few hours, I fancy."

"Any instructions about you know what, governor?"

"None yet. I have to see the house first. I want to make the expose complete."

"I don't think you will have very much difficulty with the duke, governor. His eyes have been pretty well opened as it is. I think he more than half suspects the truth."

"No, he don't," replied Old King Brady. "Nor do you, the whole truth. There is going to be a big surprise all around before this job is finished."

"What do you mean?"

"Watch Wall Street during the next few days, young man, and you will know what I mean. Drop anchor, captain! We are hidden from observation by the trees. This is far enough!"

The order was executed.

There in the gray of the morning the *Pixie* dropped anchor in a snug little harbor, completely land-locked, lying on the north shore of Long Island just west of Port Jefferson.

It was as lonely a spot as one could wish to see.

With the exception of the old stone house in the hollow not a trace of human occupation was anywhere visible.

And to this old stone house the prisoners were conveyed, Harry going with the others and posing as a prisoner, too.

The house proved to be a roomy old ranch of ancient build. That it had been roughly fitted up for the reception of the duke's party was evident.

A colored man and his wife stood at the door ready to welcome them.

These people were the cook and the jailer, Old King Brady informed the duke, who had not the slightest idea that he was being addressed by the old detective in disguise.

The "pirates," with the exception of the one who had acted as pilot, and the engineer came up to the house with the prisoners.

They disappeared into the left wing.

The main house was assigned to the duke's party.

Old King Brady conducted the duke to a large, upper chamber, where there was a cot bed, a table and chair.

Iron bars had been recently placed across the window.

The place looked like a prison and the room to which the Bantings were shown, was the same with the exception of a longer bed.

"Now then, good people, here you are to stay until we come to terms," said Old King Brady. "You will be locked in these rooms and only allowed out at meal-time, when you will be conducted, under guard, to the room below. Step inside, now, please. I am about to lock the doors. Young man, you will find quarters elsewhere. You are to follow me."

"I protest against this!" cried Harry, to whom the remark was addressed. "I have nothing to do with these people. It merely happened that I was on the yacht on a matter of business. Better let me go!"

"I think I see myself!" laughed Old King Brady. "Let you go to bring the New York detectives down upon us? Oh, no!"

"I can keep my mouth shut."

"You'll keep it shut pretty effectually if his 'ludship' don't cash in, for I shall drown you with the rest. In with you, now, and no more talk!"

The prisoners locked in their rooms, the Bradys descended the stairs.

Old King Brady sauntered out into the neglected garden.

"Well," he said, "I think we have fixed it, all right. Only thing now is to wait for the explosion of the mine."

"You forget the duke's diamonds, governor."

"Well, I guess, from what you say, they are not far off. Harry."

"That's as sure as shooting, but we want to know who stole them. We want to jail the thief."

"It will never be done, my boy."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Why here is Horton's daughter married to the duke's nephew."

"Nephew-in-law."

"Nephew enough to force him to overlook an attempt to rob and murder him. Don't you forget it, Banting's pull is perfect, so far as the duke is concerned."

"No matter. We don't care what they do so long as we get our pay. What's to be your charge?"

"Haven't thought."

"All the law allows?"

"Of course. We are not working for a pauper. But we must talk business. At any moment the climax may come. If I could once get hold of the diamonds I think I should take the duke into my confidence and ease the old fellow's mind."

"I wouldn't," said Harry. "He's no better than any of the rest of us. I'd let him stick it out. Anyhow, I should not bring the diamonds in until the last minute."

"Of course not. Have you any plan to get the diamonds?"

"No."

"Then I have. Listen to me, attentively, for there isn't a minute to be lost."

Upstairs in the two rooms the state of mind of all three prisoners was anything but pleasant.

The Duke of Westmoreland was pacing the floor of his prison, cursing his ill fortune and also America, of course.

In the next room the Bantings were engaged in a fierce quarrel, which was at its height, with Mrs. Banting railing away like a fish-wife, when a slight tap on the window was heard.

"Hush! For heaven sake, hold your tongue!" said the Hon. Arthur. "There's some one outside the window!"

He had scarcely spoken when the sash was pulled up and there was Young King Brady behind the bars.

"Bless my heart!" blurted Banting. "What on earth brings you out there?"

"I am here to rescue you!" whispered Harry. "I have managed to escape, and I want to help you."

"You had better help the duke first," snapped Mrs. Banting.

She looked rather annoyed than otherwise.

One would have thought she enjoyed being shut up in close quarters with the Hon. Arthur where she could give him a taste of her tongue.

Mr. Banting differed decidedly from Mrs. Banting.

"And what do you say that for?" he demanded. "You were very keen to get away a few minutes ago. Hang me, Hattie, if I can make you out! You are one thing one minute and another the next."

"Did I say I didn't want to escape?" snapped Mrs. Banting.

"You as good as said it!" retorted Mr. Banting.

"You are a fool, Arthur!"

"Thank you. Like seeks like, they say, so you must be another."

"It's a shame! I won't be treated so! I'll stay in this dirty old house and rot! I won't stir a step!"

"I heard some queer things about this house, Mrs. Banting," said Harry, on the outside of the bars.

"What do you mean?" demanded the banker's daughter, turning pale.

"Why, I heard that it belonged to your grandfather and that your father was born here, and you, too."

"What's all this?" cried Banting, bristling up.

"It's all false!" cried the girl. "This is some plot of that horrid detective. Arthur, send him away."

"I'm blest if I shall, providing he has any means of cutting those bars. This is the most sensible thing he has done yet."

"I can cut the bars in two minutes," said Harry. "See what I found in my room. A big pair of blacksmith's cutting pliers. They must have been left there by the man who put the bars up."

"Good! good!" cried Banting. "Brady, you're a brick! I ask your pardon. Cut the bars, please, Brady, and let us out, there's a good fellow. I really can't offer you a reward because I haven't got anything, don't you know; but I'll make it all right with you, Brady. When I get out—out of my troubles, I mean—I'll—aw—I'll send you a check."

It was all that Harry could do to keep a straight face.

"Does Mrs. Banting go, too?" he asked.

"I go with my husband, of course!" snapped the banker's daughter. "My father will suitably reward you, young man."

"Oh, I daresay!" replied Harry. "I'll cut the bars."

"You cut the bars of your own room, I suppose?" inquired Banting.

"That's what I did. Cut the bars, jumped out the window, found this ladder in the barn and started in to help you, and small thanks I am getting for it, seems to me."

"It will be all right," persisted Banting.

"Why didn't you go to the duke first?" asked his wife.

"The duke's window is guarded, that's why. Oh, what a lot of talk! I don't think you two want to be rescued. I think I'll go away."

"No, no, no!" cried Banting. "You're making half the talk yourself. Why don't you go to work?"

Harry laughed and began to cut the bars with the pliers. In a few minutes he had removed them all.

"Now, Mrs. Banting," he said, "this ladder is old and shaky and won't bear more than one person at a time. I will go down and you follow. Be careful you don't fall."

Harry ran nimbly down the ladder.

"She'll have to come," he thought. "She dare not hold back, however much she might want to do so."

He was right.

There was something doing in the way of talk, with the Bantings, for a minute, and then the lady climbed out upon the ladder.

The Hon. Arthur looked as if he would have liked to come down first if he had dared.

Harry stood by the ladder with his hand upon it.

Crash!

Down went the ladder the instant the lady's foot touched the ground.

"Hey! Hello! What in thunder!" cried Banting.

He was interrupted by his lady's scream.

Out of the bushes darted the grizzled pirate chief, and caught her by the arm.

"Unhand that lady!" cried Harry.

"I'll blow your brains out if you don't instantly get back into the house!" said Old King Brady.

Harry almost threw a fit.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" he cried. "I'll do just as you say!"

"Unhand me!" sputtered Mrs. Banting. "Let go of me, you brute!" And all this in the same breath while Harry and the old detective were playing their parts.

Two pirates now appeared.

"Watch that window and see that that fellow don't jump out!" said Old King Brady, and he led the banker's daughter into one of the big rooms on the lower floor.

Harry preceded them.

Here the doors were locked.

"Take that chair, my dear," said Old King Brady. "I want to have a little chat with you."

Mrs. B. turned pale.

Not only had the "bloodthirsty pirate's" manner changed, but his voice had altered, too.

Mr. Horton's daughter was sharp.

She looked again and knew the detective in his disguise.

Instead of taking the chair, she walked to the window and stood looking out.

Harry winked at Old King Brady.

He was about to make a move, but the old detective motioned to him not to do it.

"Give her time," he scrawled on a scrap of paper. "She has tumbled to it all."

Young King Brady nodded and sat down upon the cheap table, lighting a cigarette.

Moments of silence passed.

Then suddenly Mrs. Banting wheeled around and faced the detectives.

"My father will make you sweat for this, man!" she burst out.

"Elegant language for a lady; really quite choice!" sneered Old King Brady. "I hardly think your bankrupt father is in a position now to harm me."

"It's a lie! He's not bankrupt! He will weather the storm!"

"Now you are dropping into the nautical. What is to save him? The duke's diamonds which you have in your corset? Well, perhaps."

Mrs. Banting burst out in wild rage.

"This is a trap!" she screamed. "You set a dirty trap for me. You are a pair of fakirs! What have you done with my father? Why isn't he here? If he was he'd blame soon do you up. These men would back him. He's not to be bullied. It's all very well for you two to bully a poor woman like me, but J. Q. Horton don't stand for any such guff. You lie, Brady! You lie! I never stole the duke's diamonds. I haven't got them. I said from the first that it was a mistake to bring you into this!"

"Oh, dear, dear! Why, really, you ought to go on the stage!" said Old King Brady, mildly.

Harry burst out laughing. He just couldn't keep it in.

"Let me out!" cried the infuriated girl, springing to the door. "Let me out, I say! This is my father's house. I won't be made a prisoner. Let the duke go to blazes! I'll go away with my husband, and——"

"And the diamonds? Oh, no!"

Old King Brady was on top as usual.

He made a sign to Harry, which was promptly obeyed.

The Bradys know their business.

Harry caught Mrs. Banting's two arms from behind and pinioned her hands to her side.

Old King Brady made a dive for her corset.

It was the wash-leather bag containing the duke's diamonds which he held up as he added:

"Now, my dear, we will open the door and you may follow the duke to blazes or any other old seaport if you wish."

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

Old King Brady's remark about opening the door was made in the excitement of the moment.

As a matter of fact he had no intention of doing anything of the kind.

He was let out of this slip of the tongue easily enough.

Mrs. Banting flew at him like a tigress, and tried to scratch his face as soon as Harry let go of her hands.

Harry jumped in and pulled her away.

If he had not done so she would have pulled the bag of diamonds away from Old King Brady.

"What shall I do with her, governor?" cried Harry. "By gracious! she'll get the best of me!"

Harry had all he could handle.

The elegant Mrs. Banting kicked his shins, spit in his

face, tried to bit him and made things lively in a dozen ways.

"I'll settle her," said Old King Brady. "She's worse than her father. She deserves no consideration and will get none."

Thus saying the old detective snapped a pair of handcuffs about the Hon. Mrs. B.'s wrists.

This seemed to bring her to her senses.

She sank into the chair and began to cry.

"Let her cry it out," whispered Old King Brady. "There's your new woman! She belonged to the swellest set among the 400. Heaven help the poor fellow who has got her for a wife!"

"What do you propose to do with her, governor?"

"Ask the duke. We are working for him."

"That's so. I was surprised when you talked of letting her go."

"Oh, that was a mere slip of the tongue! I have no intention of doing anything of the kind."

"I should say not!"

"Of course not. What we want to do is to make her confess."

"Do you think she stole the diamonds?"

"Either she or her father did. Goodness knows which! I thought it was the old man until you told me about her making a rush for her own stateroom when the alarm of pirates came. But hush! She is getting ready to do business now."

The sobs had ceased and Mrs. B. raised her head.

"What do you mean to do with me, Mr. Brady?" she asked, chokingly.

"That depends upon the duke, and upon yourself. If you will confess all I will plead with him to show you mercy; but you want to act promptly. Have no hope that your father will be able to help you. He is as much in my power as you are. I know all."

"All but who stole the duke's diamonds," said the girl. "You don't know that."

"Your father——"

"No, he did not steal them. He shall not be charged with that crime. It was I."

"Aye, aye!" cried Old King Brady. "Go on, my dear: confession is good for the soul."

"I did it on the spur of the moment. I have never stolen anything before, and I denied to father that I took the diamonds, although he charged me with it as soon as we were alone. I was to be married to Arthur that night, and I knew what you seem to know about father that he has lost all his wealth and depended entirely upon his success with the duke in this railroad deal to save him from bankruptcy. I knew also that the deal was off, the duke having refused to enter into it. So I took the diamonds in order that I might have something in the way of a private fortune of my own."

"Ah!" said Old King Brady. "Thank you. Now we know all."

"And now you will let me go away with my husband?"

(Continued on page 28.)

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(Continued from page 26.)

"Oh, no! You seem to be a pair of crooks, my dear. We are working for the duke. We'll just see what he has to say about this. Harry, slip out and call in a couple of the boys to keep guard over this young lady, while we have a talk with his grace, upstairs."

This was done.

Harry returned in a moment with the two men.

Old King Brady and Harry then started to interview the duke.

"On second thought I don't think I will show my hand yet," said the old detective when they got out into the hall.

"You go up and show him the diamonds. I must be ready for Horton when he comes."

"Hark!" cried Harry. "Isn't that the signal now?"

A shot rang out in the distance, in the direction of the yacht.

"You're right it is!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "We haven't a moment to lose! Get Banting and the duke down at once!"

The old detective hurried to the wing where the "pirates" were.

As yet he had not had an opportunity to examine the diamonds in the bag, which he thrust into his pocket, hastily, after Mrs. Banting was calmed down.

Harry bounded up the stairs, two steps at a time.

Opening the door of the room where Banting was, that individual almost fell into his arms.

The Hon. Arthur was mad clear through, now.

"You villain! What have you done with my wife?" he roared.

He struck out at Harry, and it was only by dodging that Young King Brady avoided the blow.

"Brace up, Banting! Take a tumble to yourself!" Harry cried.

"I—I won't take a tumble!" sputtered Banting. "You're a fraud! You're a fakir! You are in with the pirates! Give me my wife! I want my wife!"

Again he struck at Harry.

Young King Brady was ready for him this time.

As Banting rushed at him Harry slyly put out his foot, tripped him up and sent him on his nose.

Before he could rise Young King Brady seized him by the collar, gave him a good kick and stood him on his feet.

"Now will you be good?" he cried.

"Oh! oh! oh! You shall sweat for this!" cried Banting. But he did not try striking out again.

"Just what your wife said when I settled her," laughed Harry. "Come along, Banty, I'll take you to Mrs. B. Probably you'll be a little bit mad when you see how she's fixed; but you will get over it in time."

Young King Brady then ran Banting downstairs and turned him loose in the room.

Then he hurried to the room where the duke was confined.

"What is it? Have you found a way of escape?" cried

the duke, springing forward as Harry entered. How did you manage to get the key?"

"Oh, I fixed that all right, your grace," replied Harry. "Come with me, downstairs. There's going to be a whole lot doing in a minute, and I want you to be on hand."

"But I don't understand——"

"You will in a few minutes. Follow me, please. There is no time to be lost."

Deeply puzzled, the duke followed Harry to the room downstairs.

One of the "pirates" opened the door in response to the detective's knock.

Banting was pacing the floor, madder than ever.

"Unhandcuff my wife!" he cried. "This is an outrage! Take off those handcuffs, I say!"

"Really this is strange business!" exclaimed the duke. "I am puzzled to understand what's going forward, Young King Brady. Handcuffs on Arthur's wife! What——"

"I'll take them off if she'll promise to be good," said Harry.

"You have my promise," said Mrs. Banting. "Arthur, don't be a fool! Stand still, for heaven sake!"

Old King Brady's instructions had been to remove the handcuffs as soon as the duke came into the room.

Harry had the key and he had barely time to use it when there was something of an uproar in the garden outside.

"This is evidently the place, gentlemen," the voice of Banker Horton was heard calling.

Some one shouted: "Surrender!"

Then the outer door came in with a crash.

"Speak, you scoundrel! What have you done with the Duke of Westmoreland? Where is my daughter?" Horton's voice was heard demanding.

"Why, it is Mr. Horton! He has come to our rescue!" cried the duke as the door was thrown open and Horton, followed by two men, burst into the room.

There were other men in the hall outside, and others still in the garden.

"Your grace! Have they injured you in any way?" cried Horton, effusively. "I got wind of this outrage from my yacht's crew. I met the launch while coming off to the Pixie. I immediately telephoned police headquarters for a tug and detectives. Luckily we were able to trace up the yacht, and here we are!"

"And most thankful I am to see you!" exclaimed the duke. "Horton, I shan't forget this! I owe a great deal to you, my good friend. I——"

"Stop!" cried a stern voice at the door, and Old King Brady, in his usual dress, entered the room.

"You owe him nothing, duke!" he said, pointing at the banker. "This is a plot and the arch plotter stands beside you, there!"

"Old King Brady, the detective!" gasped Horton, falling back.

"How on earth did you get here?" demanded the duke.

"Probably you don't recognize the pirate captain, your

grace," replied Old King Brady, changing his voice to the one which he had used in playing that role.

"Then it was you?"

"No one else."

"And the pirates?"

"Were merely a lot of Central Office detectives, in my charge. I was engaged by that scoundrel there to capture the yacht and kidnap you in order that he might win favor with you by a sensational rescue. That's the true story, your grace. Let him deny that he hired me in blind Ike Brandy's den in Chrystie Street if he dares!"

Banker Horton was deathly pale.

The "pirates" had all gathered in the room now, and each wore his detective shield pinned prominently on his coat.

Horton's own detectives mingled with them, familiarly. Altogether it was a strange scene.

"Speak, Horton! Is this true?" demanded the duke.

"No, it is all false!" stammered Horton. "I have never seen Old King Brady since I left him on the yacht."

"He is a liar, a swindler, an ex-gambler and crook, and above all a ruined man in spite of his claims to great wealth," said Old King Brady. "Your grace, you have had a narrow escape from the clutches of one of the biggest rascals on Wall Street."

"My diamonds! Did he steal them?" cried the duke.

"Here are your diamonds, duke!" replied the detective, producing the wash-leather bag.

"He did not steal them, but his daughter did. I trust they are all here. I have not had time to examine them."

The duke seized the bag and tore it open, emptying its contents on the table.

"I know how many there ought to be," he said, in a trembling voice. "I——"

"Heavens, man!" cried Old King Brady, "these are not diamonds! They are only fakes!"

"It is so!" exclaimed the duke. "Speak, you woman! What have you done with my diamonds?"

"I've confessed and I can't go back on it," said Mrs. Banting, coolly. "If those are not the duke's diamonds, I don't know what they are. They are what I stole."

"You little fool!" snarled Horton. "What did you confess for? As for you, old man," he added, turning to the duke, "I don't believe you ever had any diamonds. It is my opinion that you carried these things about with you merely as a bluff."

"If you were a gentleman I should knock you down," cried the duke, "but seeing that you are the low scoundrel you are I have nothing to say."

"But I have!" cried Old King Brady, springing forward. "Take off your coat, Horton! Stand up and be searched!"

"I won't!" cried the banker, turning pale. "Don't you dare put a hand on me!"

But he was in no position to help himself just then.

The instant he opened his mouth Old King Brady knew that he had the diamonds.

Two of the detectives seized his arms and held him.

Then the Bradys did the searching.

"There are your diamonds, duke!" cried Old King Brady, producing a little leather bag from a secret pocket in the banker's vest. "This time there is no mistake!"

And there was none.

When the leather bag was opened there were the diamonds intact, save for the two stones Arthur Banting had stolen.

Horton had not a word to say.

Mrs. Banting, however, could not hold her tongue.

"What does it mean?" she cried. "I took the bag of diamonds when the light went out. They have never been out of my possession since until Old King Brady took them away."

"Had you examined your diamonds lately, your grace?" asked Old King Brady.

"No," replied the duke, "I confess I had not."

"Then all there is about it, Horton had already robbed you before the incident on the yacht occurred. He had taken the real bag of diamonds and put the fake bag in its place. Horton, is it not so?"

"Find out the best way you can!" snarled the banker. "I'm not helping your theories out."

"Duke, what is to be done with that fellow?" Old King Brady now demanded.

And the answer of the duke was prompt and decided.

"My wife's nephew has married his daughter. I want no scandal. I have got my diamonds and I have saved my railroad bonds and cash. Let him go."

* * * * *

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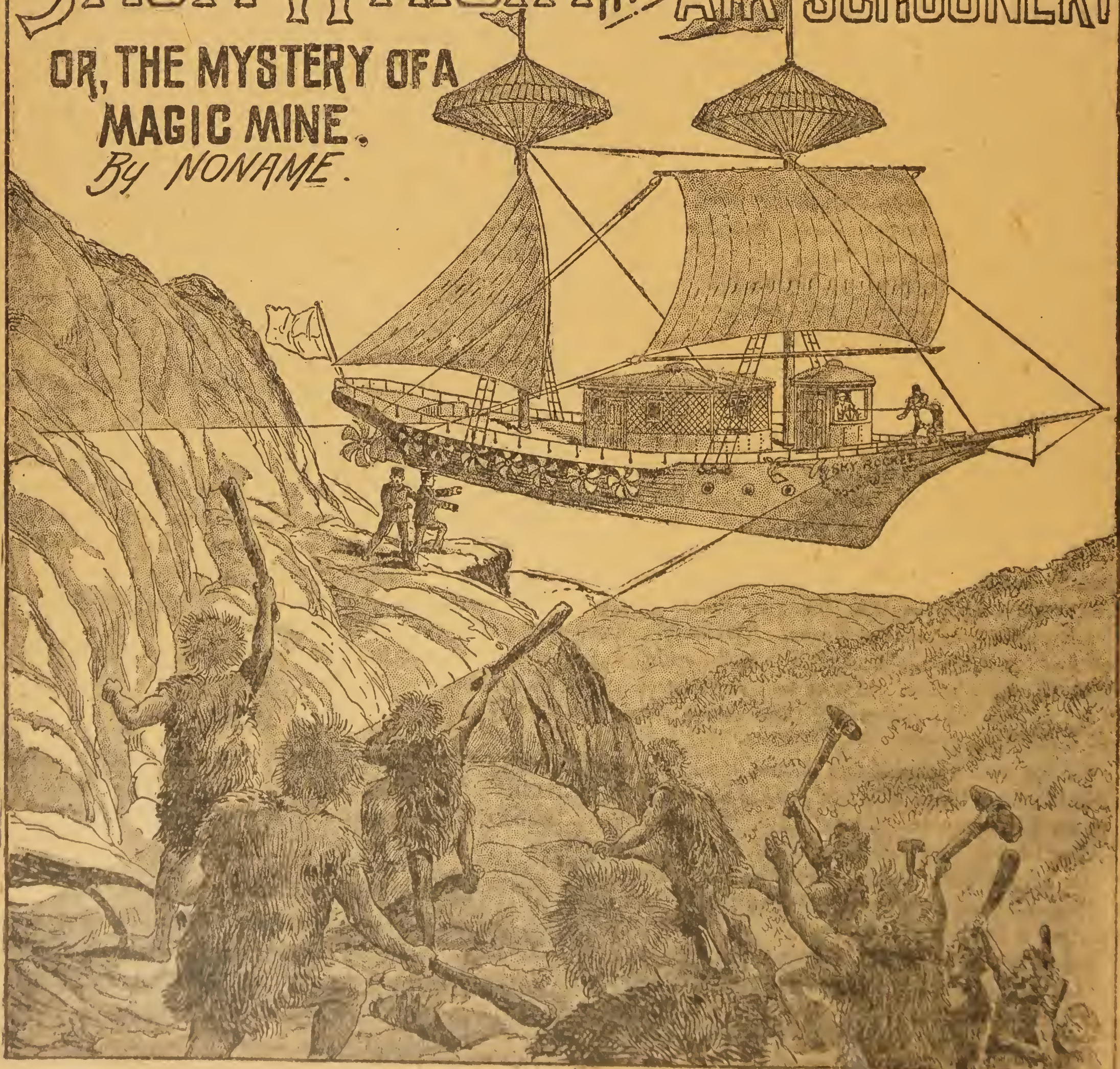
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